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The American **RECORD GUIDE**



August, 1955
Volume 21, No. 12



AMERICANA FROM
COLUMBIA

ERNEST BLOCH'S
STRING QUARTETS



THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

ELGAR'S EDWARDIAN SYMPHONY No. 2

ELGAR: *Symphony No. 2 in E flat, Op. 63;* Sir John Barbirolli conducting the Hallé Orchestra. RCA Victor LBC-1088, \$2.98.

▲ELGAR'S *Second Symphony* was begun during the last year of the reign of King Edward VII as a tribute to him. The death of the King in 1910 changed its dedication "To the Memory of His late Majesty King Edward VII," and undoubtedly altered the work in many places. The slow movement, elegiac in character, has been likened to a funeral march. There is a hint of sorrow in the opening movement after the bold assurance of its opening themes and a similar transition in mood in the scherzo. The final pages of elevated nobility of the fourth movement are tranquil and deeply moving. Elgar has been likened to Brahms, and indeed his opening movement, with its complex contrapuntal texture, recalls Brahms to mind. Yet, as that discerning modern, English critic, Neville Cardus, has said in his book *Ten Composers* (Jonathan Cape-London): "The Brahms-Strauss fingerprints are misleading. Let the investigation be carried in the direction of Bruckner; there is a likeness between the two composers in their main styles and attitudes of music, allowing for the difference between Styria and the Malvern Hills. Bruckner was not interested in any Empire of this earth, and Elgar

made the most of two worlds. Bruckner was naive to the point of helplessness as a technician; and Elgar was master of the orchestra." And that masterfulness is apparent in this symphony.

Elgar's symphonies belong to the Edwardian era, but they are no more dated than the music of any other composer who identified himself closely with his own period. Their *nobilmenti* is in keeping with their time. To my ears, the *Second Symphony* has always spoken with more confiding emotions than the *First*, perhaps because I remember from childhood the respect and good will engendered by the reign of Edward VII through my father, who had a strong attachment for England, where he was educated.

Listening to this performance, I was reminded of Barbirolli's association with the English scene and his justified successes there as a conductor. His performance is the work of a knowing musician; it is carefully worked out with an unmistakable feeling of pride and affection for the score. Remembering an earlier version of the composer's, I feel that Elgar clarified or emphasized some passages better than Barbirolli, but this may have to do with the recording which is not quite as clearly detailed or as brilliant as the recent issue of the *First Symphony* by Boult (LHMV 1036).

—P.H.R.

The American RECORD GUIDE

formerly
The American Music Lover

Volume 21, No. 12
August, 1955

Cover Picture: Ernest Bloch (see page 387)

THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE, published at Pelham, N. Y. Editorial Office, 115 Reed Ave., Business Office: Room 16, Post Office Bldg.

•Peter Hugh Reed, Editor & Publisher. James Lyons, Associate Editor. Robert H. Reid, Phil Hart, C. J. Luten, Philip L. Miller, James Norwood, Anson W. Peckham, Max de Schauensee, Harold C. Schonberg, Contributors. Paul Girard, Advertising & Circulation.

•The American Record Guide, published on the tenth of the dated month, sells at 35c a copy. Annual subscription in the U.S.A. and Canada is \$3.50. In all foreign countries, \$4.00.

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•Re-entered as 2nd class matter July 1, 1953 at the Post Office at New Rochelle, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1879. Additional re-entry at Post Office, Easton, Pa., June 1950. (Contents copyright 1955 by Peter Hugh Reed.)

August, 1955

LOOKING AHEAD

IT IS rumored that many companies are busily engaged in recording new operatic performances in Europe these days. RCA Victor, whose recording of Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* with Albanese, Bjoerling and Merrill is to be released in September, has just completed at Rome a new recording of Verdi's *Aida* with Milianov, Bjoerling, Warren and Barbieri. News from Paris informs us that HMV has just completed Massenet's *Manon* with Victoria de los Angeles in the title role and Pierre Monteux as conductor. In March, HMV issued in England, a performance of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* with de los Angeles, di Stefano, and Gobbi in the leading roles, which should be released over here in the fall.

1955 promises to be one of the biggest operatic years in the history of the phonograph. Undoubtedly, the greatest single investment will have been made by London Records (English Decca), said to amount to over a million dollars. London has just completed a recording of Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* with six outstanding stars of today—Tebaldi, del Monaco, Simionato, Siepi, Ettore Bastianini (who will be recalled for his brilliant performances this past season at the Metropolitan), and Corena. Shortly at Rome, London will record Puccini's *Turandot* with Inge Borkh and Mario del Monaco in the leading roles, and in the autumn at Florence, this company plans to record Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'amore* and *La Favorita*, with di Stefano, Guedin and Bastianini in the former, and Simionato, Poggi, Bastianini and Jerome Hines in the latter.

At Bayreuth this summer, London aims to acquire Wagner's complete *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and *The Flying Dutchman*. In celebration of the 200th anniversary of Mozart's birth next year, London has already completed four operas—*Le Nozze di Figaro* with Kleiber (conductor), Della Casa (Countess), Gueden (Susanna), Danco (Cherubino), Siepi (Figaro), and Alfred

Boehle (Count); *Don Giovanni* with Krips (conductor), Siepi (Don Giovanni), Corena (Leporello), Dermota (Ottavio), Rysanek (Anna), Della Casa (Elvira), and Guedin (Zerlina); *Die Zauberflöte* with Karl Boehm (conductor), Lipp (Queen), Gueden (Pamina), Simoneau (Tamino), Kurt Boehm (Sarastro), and Berry (Papageno); and *Cosi fan tutte* with Boehm (conductor), Dermota (Ferrando), Kunz (Guglielmo), Della Casa (Fiordiligi), Christa Ludwig (Dorabella), Loose (Despina) and Schoeffler (Alfonso). Later in the fall, London plans to record in Vienna Richard Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*.

Useful Products

Those who are troubled with LP static and resultant dust are recommended to a product called Stati-Mute. It is a handy little gadget which does not touch the record and is easily attached to the pickup. It contains a material that ionizes the air above the record and neutralizes the static charge that normally causes the collection of dust familiar to LP users. The Stati-Mute is said to last forever which makes it a product worthy for consideration. Both your editor and Mr. Varkonyi have used it for a couple of months and found it successful. It is preferable in our estimation to liquid applications to LP grooves. That usual ball of dust which we had to eliminate at the end of a record play, by touching the needle after each performance, was no longer in evidence. Stati-Mute is sold in record shops, but to readers of this magazine it can be bought at a special price of \$2.95 from The Williams Co., P.O. Box 348, White Plains, New York.

Those who use changers have probably discovered by now the advantages of RCA Victor's raised outer and inner sections of the record which protect playing grooves from surface-contact abrasions. Since the bulk of most LP collections do not have these raised sections, those who use changers will find "Nontouch Recordisks" a useful product in preventing damages to the grooves. These small cardboard circles, 4" in diameter, that fit over the

label center of the record, are manufactured and sold by B & G Products, 205 East Liberty St., Ann Arbor, Michigan. They come in packages of four and sell for \$1.00.

LP RE-ISSUES

Both RCA Victor and Columbia are adding monthly to their Camden and Entré re-issues of past performances, that formerly were among best sellers in their 78-rpm catalogues. Unquestionably, there is a large market for many of these performances on LP, especially among buyers who do not have modern equipment. The reproduction of most of these pre-war issues is surprisingly good. What is missing, if heard on hi-fi equipment, is a comparable richness in sound in the low and middle ranges found in modern recordings. The high end in many cases is an improvement over the original 78 versions.

Among recent Camden issues is a performance of Strauss' *Don Quixote* (CAL-202) which many collectors will want to own. Since RCA Victor does not mark all its Camden releases with the original artists' names, only those in the know will realize that the Warwick Orchestra is a sobriquet for the Philadelphia Orchestra. While most issues marked Warwick Orchestra in the past have been featuring performances by Leopold Stokowski, this one, dating from 1941, is by Eugene Ormandy, with Emanuel Feuermann as solo cellist. Deleting the famous cellist's name seems a mistake, since he is the main attraction that should sell the disc. Two other recently released performances of Strauss' works, conducted by Mr. Ormandy, are *Heldenleben* (CAL-194) and *Sinfonia Domestica* (CAL-248), both dating from 1939. Soundwise these recordings are as acceptable as most of the LP issues of five or six years ago.

Other recent Warwick Orchestra issues (further Stokowski performances) include Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* coupled with Borodin's *Dances of the Polovetski Maidens* (CAL-203), Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony* (CAL-212), and Mozart's *Sinfonia Con-*

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Left to right:
Parisot, Smith,
Cowell, Kirkpat-
rick, Boatwright.
(Photo by
Fred Plaut)



AMERICANA FROM COLUMBIA

By James Lyons

IN THE March issue I discussed the first microgroove recording of Antheil's *Ballet mécanique*, which was coupled with Brant's *Signs & Alarms* and *Galaxy 2* on Columbia ML-4956. Those performances were a down payment on the "Modern American Music Series" for 1955. Six such discs have been issued annually under the same auspices since 1953. The remaining five of this year's notable release are now at hand. Their contents are detailed below, along with certain other items from the current Columbia list that warrant inclusion on grounds of compatibility.

From every point of view the most noteworthy of the several offerings is the side given over to Carl Ruggles, that wonderful old iconoclast who has so long (he's now 80) escaped the attention of the public and professionals alike. Like the late Charles Ives, Ruggles is a New Englander through and through and his music embodies all of those virtues, primarily in-

dependence, that are popularly ascribed to our historic northeast. Both *Lilacs* and *Portals* are programmatically mystic, but neither is the least bit foggy as to musical communication. The *Evocations* are, in effect, miniature portraits; the third of them is dedicated to Ives and all but captures his essence photographically. This music is long overdue in the recorded repertory but its belated arrival is no less cause for jubilation. Let us have more Ruggles, *Angels* in particular.

Henry Cowell's *Toccata* dates from 1938. The portmanteau title was meant to imply a vocal toccata, and accordingly this five-movement work is a wordless vocalise sequence of no specific connotations. A lovely business it is, too, notwithstanding an unseemly resemblance to the Villa-Lobos *Bachianas Brasileiras* for celli and voice that used to be so ubiquitous.

Australian-born Peggy Glanville-Hicks is a sometime critic for The New York

Herald Tribune and one of our most gifted young composers. Her *Sonata* of 1952 is an angular odalisque of a piece, gamelanish in the McPhee manner but thoroughly civilized despite a persistent preoccupation with percussive sentiment and thematic reference to the literature of the Watuzzi Africans. There is a delicious audacity in it, at the same time—imagine asking grace notes of a xylophone! The *Concertino* of 1945 is much more intimate, more typically Glanville-Hicks in style if not in its syntax, which is a blend of vestigial atonalism and academic neoclassicism. If you can picture a Viennese having an argument with a Parisienne, and the latter winning on wit but neither having too much to say, you will not miss the point of this saucy score.

Russian-born Nikolai Lopatnikoff's *Variations and Epilogue* (1946) is vastly different in character from his *Concertino* of two years before. The larger work sounds for all the world like a re-write a Piston's *The Incredible Flutist* with Rousselish touches. The study for cello and piano, a memorial to the composer's

first wife, is a heavy-going, rather Rachmaninovistic elegy, melodically undistinguished and very much in the doleful-soulful genre.

Samuel Barber's *Hermit Songs* of 1953 are settings of ten cryptic manifestos and aphorisms by anonymous Celtic monks and scholars of the 8th-13th centuries as translated by Sean O'Faolain, W. H. Auden, Chester Kallmann and Howard Mumford Jones. It is diverting to contrast Barber's pungent poignance with the textually similar *Carmina Burana* of Orff. The younger man makes no attempt to unify his poetic material, still manages to achieve an expressive unity for the total conception. Miss Price's interpretation is especially persuasive.

Russian-born Alexei Haieff's *String Quartet No. 1* was written in 1949 on time borrowed from his subsequently successful piano concerto. To these ears it was wasted effort. The music is moderately astringent, but there is more torsion than tension in its counterbalancing of short, Stravinsky-esque snatches of phrase à la the latter's *Concerto Grosso*. The

RUGGLES: *Lilacs* (from *Men and Mountains*); *Portals* (1952-3 revision); *Evocations* (1954 revision); **COWELL:** *Toccata*; respectively the Juilliard String Orchestra conducted by Frederick Prausnitz; the same; John Kirkpatrick (piano); Helen Boatwright (soprano), Carlton Sprague Smith (flute), Aldo Parisot (cello) and Kirkpatrick. ML-4986.

GLANVILLE-HICKS: *Sonata for Piano and Percussion*; *Concertino da Camera*; **LOPATNIKOFF:** *Variations and Epilogue* for cello and piano; respectively the New York Percussion Group and Carlo Bussotti (piano) conducted by Carlos Surinach; New York Woodwind Ensemble and Bussotti; Nikolai Graudan (cello) and Joanna Graudan (piano). ML-4990.

BARBER: *Hermit Songs*; **HAIEFF:** *String Quartet No. 1*; respectively Leontyne Price (soprano) with Samuel Barber (piano) and the Juilliard String Quartet. ML-4988.

THOMSON: *String Quartet No. 2*; **SCHUMAN:** *Voyage*; respectively the Juilliard String Quartet and Beveridge Webster (piano). ML-4987.

PERSICHETTI: *Concerto for Piano—Four Hands*, Op. 56; **CRESTON:** *Sonata for Saxophone and Piano, Op. 19*; respectively Vincent and Dorothea Persichetti and Vincent J. Abato

(saxophone) with Paul Creston (piano). ML-4989.

(The foregoing five discs comprise the balance of Columbia's 1955 "Modern American Music Series," price \$4.98 each.)

HILL: *Prelude for Orchestra*; **LOPATNIKOFF:** *Concertino for Orchestra, Op. 30*; **DALLAPICCOLA:** *Tartiniiana*; Ruth Posselt (violin, in the last-listed) and the Columbia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leonard Bernstein. Columbia LP ML-4996, \$4.98.

SCHUMAN: *Symphony No. 6*; **PISTON:** *Symphony No. 4*; the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia LP ML-4992, \$4.98.

YARDUMIAN: *Armenian Suite*; *Violin Concerto*; *Desolate City*; *Psalm 130*; Anshel Brusilow (violin), Howell Zulick (tenor, in the last-listed), and the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia LP ML-4991, \$4.98.

CRESTON: *Invocation and Dance*; **IBERT:** *Louisville Concerto*; **COWELL:** *Symphony No. 11*; the Louisville Orchestra conducted by Robert Whitney. Columbia LP ML-5039, \$5.98.

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drama, what there is of it, is too Ravelian to be taken seriously.

I am not sure that Virgil Thomson's *String Quartet No. 2* qualifies as "modern American music". It was composed in 1932, which was 23 years ago, and even at that time Thomson had been resident in Paris for ten years. Nevertheless there can be no question of the work's deserving phonographic attention strictly on its merits, and surely it has the aspects of a soothing balm in such company as surrounds it in this omnibus release. Archaic, in the nicest sense, is perhaps the right word for it. You keep expecting it to break out in a hymn any moment, as Thomson's music is apt to. There is a faint echo of the *Voces Intimae* of all things—odd, because Sibelius is anathema to Thomson—and certain of the pages could have come straight out of Haydn or even out of Brahms in one of his more lyrical moods. Withal, a melodious, gracefully shaped piece, with no surprises at all except in that there are no surprises.

William Schuman's "Voyage"

William Schuman's *Voyage* (1953) is a far cry from his earlier *Symphony No. 6* (1948) only in decibel content. The piano work might be approached in choreographic terms because it is so irrevocably associated with Martha Graham's dance tableaux, but actually the original "had no thought" of an extra-musical plot. The titles of the individual sections were added after Schuman had seen Graham's handwork. Anyway, this is questing, deadly serious music, with strikingly interrogative clusters of repeated-note patterns to which there are no answers. The symphony is likewise of grim mien, and just as expressively compact for all its brooding, sepulchral air, with a magnificent epilogue-like close that inevitably recalls the same-numbered symphony of Vaughan Williams.

Vincent Persichetti's four-hand study of 1952 is unfortunately just that—a sort of labyrinthine étude without even a momentary flash of spontaneous inspiration. As a composition it is most impressive, but the effects are all of them



Vincent Persichetti
(Photo by Fred Plaut)

so carefully calculated and so coolly sophisticated that one begins to yearn for a handful of dropped notes just to break up the perfection. After all, the principal charm of four-hand music is in its affirmation of the sheer joy of collaboration. The Persichetti sound as if they were working out a mathematical formula together. What's to enjoy?

Paul Creston's *Saxophone Sonata* of 1939 is awfully note-heavy and not devoid of the blip-blips that usually inhibit any music for this instrument. The fact is that Creston is not a facile composer; his "light touch" is likely to be leaden. Remembering that he is the organist at St. Malachy's Church in midtown Manhattan, one is tempted to conjecture that this score represents an attempt to formalize the sounds he would encounter en route to and from work. Whatever its motivation, the jazzy overlay just isn't convincing. Nor is Creston equipped to "keep it gay" in the frothy French fashion. Still, this is pleasant listening until the saxophone's piercing tone gets oppressive. With some accompaniment other than a piano, perhaps, the story would be different.

E. B. Hill's *Prelude* of 1953 is an unreconstructed Harvard gentleman's sensuous distillate of impressionist sensuality. The Debussy and Delius fibers are skillfully woven into a distinctive cloth and impeccably tailored into a fine conservative suiting. The sobriety is not as innocuous as you might imagine. Would that we had more of such unpretentious music-making, so sensible in its directness and yet so subtle in its understatement. Appraising it more specifically poses the same problems that George H. L. Smith noted in writing about the composer himself: "It is not possible to draw a cunning likeness of a man who has learned to be brilliantly normal".

The Italian-born Luigi Dallapiccola is a rarely talented alumnus of the twelve-tone school who is not unmindful of his national heritage. His *Tartiniana* of 1951 is a kind of take-off on (three) Tartini sonatas. The precedence of Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* is somewhat obtrusive, but Dallapiccola is uniquely successful in flavoring the olden esthetic of violinism with the tartness that goes with all exotic cooking. On paper, the challenge here was to treat with diatonically conceived themes in rigorous tone-row counterpoint. Aside from having achieved this, the composer managed to suffuse his intellectual exercise with the glow of colors that are not otherwise found in the contemporary spectrum.

Walter Piston's *Fourth*, also written in 1951, is an amiable essay in neoromanticism with a slight admixture of classic elements. Mostly it is a sunny, outgoing piece, uncomplicated alike in structure and emotional content. There is a slight suggestion of Sibelius in the slow movement, not unnaturally in view of the composer's cultural environment, but otherwise the style is personal and as original as conservative music, by definition, can be, and it holds the ears.

Richard Yardumian is a Philadelphia-born composer who might reasonably

be described, without apologies to the introspective Hovhaness, as America's own Khachaturian. The *Armenian Suite* is about what you would expect it to be, by turns brashly bright and piquantly pastoral and no great shakes in any event. The other works do not disclose any such permeating ancestral influence, but always there is the impression that an exotic quality is being made to substitute for a personal expression. The *Desolate City* is movie music of a high order, graphically documentary in its verisimilitude. I liked best the violin concerto, which is for the most part an eloquent monologue in modified 12-tone style. In time we can, I think, expect finer things indeed from this young man. He has only to put his forefathers out of his creative unconscious.

We need not detain ourselves with the Creston, Ibert, and Cowell works assembled on the last-listed disc because all of them have been considered elsewhere. They appeared earlier among the December, April, and January releases, respectively, of The Louisville Orchestra's limited edition series. Presumably they have been re-coupled in this way to lure the broader public into joining the subscription audience. I trust that a good many will accept the invitation, which is detailed on the special wrap-around prospectus. Those interested may consult the article entitled "The Blue Grass Was Greener" in the April issue of this journal.

It remains only* to be said that all of the foregoing performances are first-rate, and that the recorded sound is in every case on par with Columbia's recent best. The works by Ruggles, Glanville-Hicks and Dallapiccola are especially well turned out. Posselt in the *Tartiniana*, and Brusilow in the Yardumian concerto, offer elegant soloistics. Further comment is obviated by Columbia's assurance that the respective composers approved test pressings in every case.

ERNEST BLOCH'S

FOUR STRING QUARTETS

BLOCH: *Four String Quartets—No. 1* (London LL-1125), *No. 2* (London LL-1126), *No. 3* and *No. 4* (London LL-1127); Griller String Quartet. London set LLA-23, \$11.94.

▲ERNEST BLOCH remains a somewhat isolated musical genius whose emotional depths, extraordinary vitality and sincerity have been long acknowledged by many in the musical world. In his chamber music, notably his string quartets, he gives us an insight into his spiritual thinking as well as his dominant emotional powers. There can be no doubt that these works represent personal reactions—protests, one is tempted to say—towards life in this challenging world. For such dramatic defiance and intense lamentation suggest motivations from life. Bloch has lived for a number of years in a small coastal town of Oregon, apart from the busy world. That he has not in his hermit existence lost sight of the changing world, or been spiritually affected by the changing times, is conveyed in his third and fourth string quartets. The trends of life have left their imprints at his door, and he has evidently been deeply disturbed and moved by them.

Bloch's detractors among musicians and critics have, in the past, contended that he tended to rage and sulk in his music, citing his first two quartets among other works. One English critic, reviewing his third quartet, implied this same point of view. These psychiatric implications I, as well as others, fail to recognize as dominant forces behind his music-making. Many leading composers of the past also have been subjected to the psychiatric approach in recent years, notably Tchaikovsky and even Beethoven. Fortunately, the listening public are not influenced by such approaches, although they have validity from a clinical point of view.

Bloch's relationship to Beethoven in his earlier quartets was discussed at some length in *Cobbett's*. It is worth quoting, since it may well provide an incentive for the inquiring listener to give Bloch equal status in attentive listening. "As Beethoven's strong individuality and often harshly intense feeling often repelled some of his listeners, so today does the challenging quality of Bloch's music have an alienating effect at first, on certain natures, which are, however, usually stirred out of themselves eventually by finding that they cannot remain indifferent to it." Of his first quartet, Bloch has said: "It is a kind of confession, of open heart, with no other concern, and, for that reason, a more subjective work than the three other quartets. They are more and more objective and, perhaps, detached, as far as I can judge." Like Beethoven in his later works, Bloch often rages or hurls defiance with a certain wild abandon, and then assuages with his lamentation and moods of sorrow. When Beethoven, however, abates his Herculean outbursts, he gives us melodies that not only have depth of feeling but also profiles that linger in the mind and ear. Bloch in his music conjures a depth of feeling in similar moods but, unlike Beethoven, his melodic profiles are not immediately esteemed by the listener since their elements are often more abstract. It is the mood that prevails, however, and provides the incentive for the listener to return to his music.

Bloch's first quartet, written in his thirty-sixth year (1916), has its definite racial characteristics. The second (1945), the third (1952), and the fourth (1953) cannot, as the annotator Ernest Chapman says in his notes with this set, "be described as Jewish either in subject matter or idiom. None of them has a 'program', and they are the product of a final maturity in which racial and purely personal

characteristics are blended with such purpose that it is no longer possible, even if it were desirable, to identify them as separate elements. In short, the music is the man, and the man is a wide-ranging and intensely individual personality."

The first quartet remains a work of imagination, power and unusual beauty. "This work, like my Symphony in C sharp minor or my 'Israel' Symphony," Bloch has said, "is, in some way, a synthesis of my *Weltanschauung*, my 'vision of the world, at the time I wrote it.'" This quartet will be a welcome addition to the LP catalogue to those who, like the writer, have long known and admired it in the old 78-rpm recording by the gifted Stuyvesant String Quartet. The second quartet, by far the most accessible and most readily appreciable of the four, was recently issued by Vanguard, and the third (by the Grillers) was issued earlier on a 10" disc by London. Now, we have all four quartets performed by the Grillers, who have long played them in public. This ensemble gave the first performances of the third and fourth quartets in the concert hall. Bloch dedicated his third quartet to them, in appreciation, one can believe, of their frequent programming of the first two. The fourth quartet is dedicated to Ernest Chapman.

The Last Quartets

While objective in one sense, the third and fourth quartets are more abstruse and dissonant than the other two. The third is more forceful than the fourth; only its slow movement mitigates the prevailingly dramatic defiance and vigor of the work as a whole. While its moving drama grips the listener's imagination, as I previously pointed out in my review in the March issue, it does not, as I said at that time, always sustain all listeners' attention. Some, who refuse to come to grips with the music, may be repelled at first. Bloch does not compromise with his creative urge and only those who stay with him to realize the dramatic strength and nobility of the final *Allegro* realize the true character and intent of the whole work. Many on repeated hearings will find "that they cannot remain indifferent

to it." The fourth quartet is far less forceful; much of its music suggests contemplation of peace and serenity. The first and last movements open and close with slow sections in which the composer seems to ponder on the sadness of the world. It is these sections that prevail in the listener's mind despite the driving energy of the middle sections. The second movement is a lovely intermezzo, harking back to youthful inspirations, and the third is in the nature of a scherzo with a slow inner section. In these works, there are transformations of themes which need the eye to supplement the ear (by way of scores) to appreciate the imaginative reuse of thematic material. The writing for the four strings, as in the earlier works, is masterfully achieved.

The performances on all four works are fine ones, though tonally I do not think that the playing here is quite as rich or as well unified as the performances of the Stuyvesant Quartet were in their 78 recordings of the first two quartets. There is some wiriness of tone in the Griller performances and not quite the overall smoothness. The recent version of the second quartet by the Musical Arts Quartet (Vanguard) is often more gratifying to the ear for its tonal warmth and the clearer homogeneity of the playing. But on the whole, one instinctively feels that the Grillers are deeply absorbed in their unmistakable dedication to these works and their musicianship is of a very high order. In the fourth quartet, where the music is often quiet in mood, their delicate *pianissimi* and sensitivity are attributes of a rarely gifted ensemble.

The recording is realistic, generally well balanced for music that must have presented many problems for the engineers, with an overall richness despite occasional stridency of tone. This set is by way of being a 75th birthday tribute to an engrossing composer, whose most serious and profound work has not as yet found its way into the popular, public domain. Whether or not it ever will remains a moot question, but as long as there are discerning listeners there will be a place for Bloch's chamber music in their hearts and minds.

—P.H.R.

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Notes and Reviews

THREE IS IN SOULS *a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.*

—William Cowper

ORCHESTRA

BACH: *Concerto in D minor for Two Violins; Concertos No. 1 in A minor & No. 2 in E Major;* Reinhold Barchet & Will Beh (violins) with Stuttgart Pro Musica Orchestra conducted by Walther Davission. Vox LP PL-9150, \$5.95.

BACH: *Concerto in D minor for Two Violins;* **VIVALDI:** *Concerto in C major, Op. 8, No. 6 (Il Piacere);* **HANDEL:** *Trio-Sonata in D major, Op. 5, No. 2;* Yehudi Menuhin & Gioconda de Vito (violins) with Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Anthony Bernard (in Bach) & Sir Adrian Boult (in Vivaldi); also with John Shinbourne (cello) & George Malcolm (harpsichord) (in Handel). His Master's Voice LP LHMV-16, \$4.98.

▲THE Vox disc has quite an exceptional value, for it contains both *Violin Concertos* as well as the *Concerto for Two Violins in D minor*. It is possible to imagine more lively, lighter, searching performances than these, but these readings are vigorous, straightforward and generally satisfactory. The balance between the soloists and the orchestra is adequate. Mr. Barchet's tone does not have much vibrato, with the result it often sounds wiry. Varying tone controls and equalizer to suit the ear should make quite a difference in the sound.

The HMV disc features Yehudi Menuhin in three selections. He is joined by Gioconda de Vito in two, the Handel *Trio Sonata* and the Bach *Concerto for Two*

Violins in D minor. Here is the exact opposite of the Stuttgart Bach performance. We have warm, full-blooded recording, as well as rich, almost over-ripe sound from the violins. Mr. Menuhin is somewhat more restrained in the Vivaldi *Concerto*, which incidentally comes from the collection entitled *Il Cimento dell' Armonia e dell' Invenzione*, which also contains *The Four Seasons*. The soloists are joined by a cello and harpsichord in a lush, vibrant performance of one of Handel's finest chamber works.

—R.H.R.

●
BACH: *Suites for Orchestra (Complete);* the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Otto Klemperer. Angel LP set 3536-B (including scores), \$10.98, or \$6.96.

▲THE Reiner performances, which I have inclined to favor over all others despite reservations over tempi here and there, are stunningly recorded and priced at three dollars less than this new issue. I like the Klemperer performances best now, but I am not so sure that they are worth three dollars more. The differential actually is about two dollars because the scores account for one. If we may assume hypothetically that there is no price disparity (and what with rumors in the industry there may *not* be soon enough), then I would emphatically recommend the Angel release for its splendidly proportioned, perfectly Bachian dimensions. Otherwise, questions of interpretative propriety aside, I can see no

grounds for finding against Reiner. The other versions, by Hewitt and Prohaska respectively, are over-priced altogether by direct comparison.

—J.L.

BARTOK: *Piano Concerto No. 3*; **MARTIN:** *Petite Symphonie Concertante*; Monique Haas (piano) and the RIAS Symphony Orchestra of Berlin conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Decca LP DL-9774, \$3.98.

▲THE concerto has been much recorded, most excitingly by Sandor and most compatibly (with the *No. 2*) by Farnadi. Fricsay as usual molds his orchestral conception with no loose ends, but Haas is not the electric virtuoso that this score demands for its full realization. Still their collaboration is remarkable for its musicality. Martin's work has been recorded elsewhere by his fellow Swiss, Ansermet, in tandem with a finely wrought *Baiser de la fée*. Fricsay's version of the Martin is not so carefully planned, but sonically it is superior. As in so many other cases, the coupling will be decisive.

—J.L.

BEETHOVEN: *Violin Concerto in D, Op. 61*; David Oistrakh (violin) and the Stockholm Festival Orchestra conducted by Sixten Ehrling. Angel LP 35162, \$4.98.

▲NOT especially firm accompaniment, but a splendidly free-wheeling account of the solo part. Oistrakh tosses off these thrice-familiar pages as if he were improvising, so unhesitant is his bow. Nothing seems calculated or careful, and yet nothing is there that shouldn't be. Quite acceptable sound. Myself, I would as leave have this version on my shelves as any of the seventeen others, with the similarly unbuttoned Francescatti as second best. But the old Heifetz or the new Menuhin both are better supported orchestrally, and the classic virtues still are more manifest in the Haendel or Hubermann discs, neither of which is more than minimally acceptable as to engineering.

—J.L.

BEETHOVEN: *Violin Concerto; Romances*. Opp. 40 and 50; Bronislaw Gimpel (violin) and the Bamberg Symphony conducted by Heinrich Hollreiser. Vox LP PL-9340, \$5.95.

▲GIMPEL is a first class artist and I do no hesitate to recommend his Beethoven. Supplementing the concerto with the delectable *Romances* was a happy idea, and not unreasonably it will attract a great many prospects who might otherwise gravitate to one or another of the big-name fiddlers. In all three performances the soloist plays impeccably, with a sizable and clean if not sensuous tone and far more accurate intonation than many of his more glamorous competitors. The accompaniment is satisfactory, but not much more. On the other hand, it is certainly better than Oistrakh enjoys. And the sound, like most recent Vox issues, is wonderfully full-bodied. —J.L.

BIZET: *Prelude, Minuetto and Adagietto* from *L'Arlésienne Suite No. 1*; *Pastorale* and *Farandole* from *L'Arlésienne Suite No. 2*; **FAURE:** *Pelléas et Mélisande Suite*; the Orchestra of the Paris Opéra conducted by Pierre Michel Le Conte. Capitol LP P-8311, \$4.98.

▲THE Bizet tid-bits are probably the "cream" of the two suites, although a certain percentage of prospective buyers will be disenchanted by the absence of this or that favorite section. Also, a number will insist on the complete works *plus* a compatible coupling, and the catalogues will not disappoint them. On economic grounds, then, this release is less than ideal. The Fauré piece is performed rather heavily by comparison with the luminous Paray version, which by the way is coupled with *Le Festin de l'araignée* and *L'Apprenti sorcier*. As to the Bizet, I continue to hear more in the Cluytens performances, and in the Stokowskis, than anywhere else. The latter includes the *Symphony in C*, incidentally, in what is probably its most effective, certainly its most loving, currently available interpretation. The sound herewith is Capitol's imported best, which is very good indeed.

—J.L.

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BRUCH: *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26;* **PROKOFIEV:** *Violin Concerto No. 1 in D, Op. 19;* David Oistrakh (violin) and the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lovro Von Matacic. Angel LP 35243, \$4.98 and \$3.48.

▲OISTRAKH'S Prokofiev is every bit as electric as Milstein's was recently. The coupling there was the *Symphonie Espagnole*, with the usual excision of one movement. Oistrakh's Bruch is a sizzler, too, but there are so many variously acceptable versions of this work that one hesitates to single any of them out for direct comparison. The most sensible resolution would have to be worked out on the basis of the companion work. The disc at hand is the only one that pairs these two concerti. By the process of elimination you could decide whether or not any of the many pairings are more attractive to you. If none of the others is, you won't go wrong with this recording, which is splendidly engineered. Orchestrally, too, both are right in there with the best, excepting perhaps Golschmann's outstanding job with Milstein on the Prokofiev. I might add that both of these works are available on 10" discs, which helps to straighten out the coupling confusion but only complicates the fair appraisal of an issue like the one at hand.

—J.L.

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DITTERSDORF: *Symphony in F minor (The Rescue of Andromeda by Perseus); Symphony in E flat;* Winterthur Symphony Orchestra, Egon Parolari (oboe), and Radio Zurich Orchestra, conducted by Clemens Dahinden. Concert Hall 1227, \$4.98.

▲THIS record was issued some time ago, but did not come to my attention until recently. Dittersdorf (1739-1799) was a first-rate violinist and prolific composer in many forms. As a composer, however, he rates as a minor one of the late 18th century. The influence of Haydn and Mozart are apparent, especially in the *Symphony in E flat*, which remains a respectable opus without a distinctive pro-

file. The *F minor Symphony* is the fourth of twelve program symphonies, based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In this work, Dittersdorf has evidenced a more imaginative style. It is well worth acquiring, especially for its opening *Adagio non molto*, with its beautifully played oboe solo, and the touching *Larghetto*. It will sustain repeated listenings. Dahinden is an expressive conductor and it is evident that both works were carefully prepared. The orchestral playing is competent, and the recording clean and clear. —P.H.R.

●
DEBUSSY: *La Boite à Joujoux;* **DEBUSSY-CAPLET:** *Children's Corner; L'Orchesret National de la Radiodifusion Francaise* conducted by André Cluytens. Angel LP 35172, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲THE MGM-Perlea and RCA-Stokowski versions, respectively, are outclassed in this delightful new omnibus recording if only by its superior sound. The front and back covers are liberally strewn with illustrations of toys, and the jacket notes consist of an essay by Emile Vuillermoz entitled "Music and Childhood," so that the casual customer might make the mistake of taking this for a juvenile item. Nothing of the sort. Youngsters will like it but grown-ups shouldn't look down their noses at it by any means. As the annotator says, childhood in this music is "only a pretext, a motive, a theme of grace and freshness that our musicians transpose onto a plane wellnigh inaccessible to young ears and small hands." The performances are a delight, and the more so because Cluytens seems, as usual with him, to find subtleties that elude many more virtuosic conductors. —J.L.

●
DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World"); the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Artur Rodzinski.* Westminster LP WL-5370, \$5.95.

▲WITH the Toscanini performance available at two-thirds of the price asked for Rodzinski, a great many people may not bother to invest listening time in this new issue. More's the pity, for it is a fine

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interpretation, handsomely executed and brilliantly recorded. Both versions are letter perfect in their fidelity to the score, if that does not go without saying. What gives Rodzinski's a slight edge, to these ears, is his somewhat more idiomatically American conception of a work that is supposed to be, after all, American-inspired. This is a subjective business to say the least and I should be hard put to make any kind of convincing argument, but there you are. I do suggest that you hear the Westminster in any event. Rodzinski's orchestra may not have the sheen of the NBC Symphony, but sheen isn't everything.

—J.L.

ELGAR: *Enigma Variations*, Op. 36; *Cockaigne Overture*, Op. 40; *Serenade for String Orchestra*, Op. 20; the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia LP ML-5031, \$4.98.

▲HERE I go out on a limb again. To these ears the Beecham *Enigma* is more Elgarian, more Edwardian, more enigmatic, more what-have-you, than the Toscanini performance thus far accepted as the exemplar. Somehow it seems more human; you get the definite feeling that this music is about people and about the composer's sentiments toward them, and not simply about how skillfully he could write in the variation form. The Royal Philharmonic was in superb fettle on the day this recording was accomplished, and at its best it is certainly comparable with the old NBC Symphony. As to the coupling problems, I happen to adore the *Serenade* and trust that many others will, too, now that we have a first class one in the catalogues. The *Cockaigne* I can say less for, but at the very least it is better music than we are asked to put up with in certain other instances. Wonderful sound.

—J.L.

FALLA: *The Three-Cornered Hat—Suites Nos. 1 and 2*; **TURINA:** *Sinfonia Sevillana*; Ataulfo Argenta conducting the Spanish National Orchestra. London International TW-91013, \$4.98.

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▲ARGENTA remains one of the most imaginative of Spanish conductors; his feeling for subtleties of coloration and rhythmic vibrancy are a delight to the ear. There have been a number of fine recordings of the three familiar dances from *The Three-Cornered Hat* as well as two of the complete ballet, but none of the two suites which include the dances on LP. For those who do not favor the complete ballet, this recording is recommended; it is superbly played and well recorded.

Turina's *Sinfonia* is not a symphony in the accepted sense. It is picturesque music, tonal paintings of three aspects of Seville—*Panorama*, *By the River Guadalquivir* and *Fiestas in San Juan de Aznalfarache*. This is romantic music, skillfully and colorfully scored, effective in its way but beset with numerous mannerisms that the composer repeats too often, familiar from other works. The Falla score is a major work, while the Turina remains for all its length a minor one. To my ears, it has less sustaining interest than the composer's other work, honoring Seville—*Canto a Sevilla*. It is doubtful that any other conductor could do more for this score than Argenta does; his is an artful performance, well detailed and adroitly nuanced, but the substance of the music does not sustain the interest as does Falla's. The recording is realistically atmospheric.

—P.H.R.

GLAZUNOV: *Ruses d'amour*, Op. 61; *Valses de concert Nos. 1/2*, Opp. 47 and 51; the Bolshoi Theater Orchestra conducted by Nicolai Golovanov. Colosseum LP CRLP-165, \$3.98.

▲RATHER primitive sound, but balleromanes will want to know this lesser-known counterpart of *The Seasons* and *Raymonda*. Petipa's choreography of the late 1890s may not find its way to the American stage, although you never can tell. The music, in any event, is lovely to listen to and no end evocative of ballet's brief imperial glory. The performance is doubtless faithful to Bolshoi traditions, which seem to have resisted Sovietizing more successfully

than Russian culture's other hand-me-downs. The two *Valses de concert* are of another day, too, and charmingly so.

—J.L.

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HANDEL: *Concerti Grossi, Op. 6* (Complete); the English Baroque Orchestra conducted by Hermann Scherchen. Westminster LP set WAL-403, including Lea pocket score, \$24.45 (manual coupling only).

HANDEL: *Concerti Grossi, Op. 6* (Complete): Boyd Neel conducting the Boyd String Orchestra. London set LLA-21 3 discs, \$11.94.

▲THE matter of price will be a militating factor, even if Westminster's WL issues were to be scaled down, because London's justly renowned Boyd Neel singles of the twelve concerti have just been assembled in a three-disc set. This will be a competitive problem for the other versions also; both the stiff-necked Lehmann-Decca and the warmly romantic Busch-Columbia albums contains four discs. Being a sentimentalist I will never part with the latter, for all its primitive sound. But the realistic problem of which version to acquire for regular listening would seem to solve itself if economy is a factor. I will not go into comparative virtues because there is not enough space. Suffice it to say on ample earlier evidence that the Scherchen performances are easily the most interesting and edifying of the lot, even if they are not uncomplicatedly traditional as are those of Boyd Neel, or full to overflowing with Handelian love and lilt as Busch's are.

Scherchen really gets into these scores, mines them for every ounce of interpretative basic metal. Superficially heard, they might be written off as variously stodgy or impatient. On more careful listening they disclose painstaking research, some of which has borne fruit of exotic new tastes. Briefly, the dozen works come out as follows: (1, 2) fairly straight; (3) last movement rather deliberate; (4) lines very protracted; (5) second movement exceedingly slow, with dirge-like moments near the end; (6) second move-

ment taken at express train speed, third awesomely slow; (7) the *Hornpipe* more like a *schottische*; (8,9) again relatively straight; (10) final *Allegro moderato* exceptionally *moderato*; (11) opening movement taken at a dizzy pace; (12) no relevant comment. In short, a sizable sampling of emotional music turned out mostly in the intellectual manner. Myself, I don't hold with exhaustive treatment of such simple, uncluttered expressivity. Scherchen forgets that Handel migrated to England.

The sound is excellent, as usual with Westminster, but you will probably have to change your compensation now and then. Different curves seem to obtain from one side to the next. London's engineering of the Neel transfer was expert indeed. Levels are uniform throughout.

—J.L.

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HANDEL: *Double Concerto in F*; the Berlin Chamber Orchestra conducted by Hans von Benda. London/Telefunken LP LGM-65022, \$2.98.

▲REMEMBERING the *Water Music* story, certain musicologists have conjectured that this work was composed for some occasion on which the musicians were to be deployed in three different locations, possibly even on separate barges. This because the music is scored for two "choirs" of woodwind (each having pairs of oboes, horns and bassoons) plus string orchestra and continuo. Its date of composition is uncertain, but the consensus places it somewhere between 1740 and 1750. There is another such work by Handel extant, and yet a third in fragmentary state. This one, at least, has nothing in common with the concerti grossi; all of the "opposing" groups are equal. As the annotator observes with what seems to be unwitting wit, "the chief tonal contrasts are obtained by addition or subtraction". Having duly reported the foregoing, I am bound to add that our not previously knowing it is somewhat clarified by this arrival. It is rather dull, by Handelian criteria. And this is not a very supple performance, not very luminously recorded.

—J.L.

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HAYDN: *Symphony No. 88 in G; Symphony No. 101 ("Clock")*; the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karl Muenchinger. London LP LL-1199, \$3.98.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 92 ("Oxford")*;

BEETHOVEN: Overtures—*Coriolan, Prometheus, Leonore No. 3*; respectively the Royal Orchestra of Copenhagen and the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Nicolai Malko. RCA Victor LBC-1087, \$2.98.

▲UNLIKE most, apparently, I am not an admirer of Muenchinger. I am especially pleased, therefore, to note thorough-going approval of these Haydn performances. Perhaps the conductor fails to identify with the composer whenever there is humor to be exposed, but the music is sturdy enough to stand a nonsense approach and there is much to be said for the straight and narrow in this repertory, anyway. This pairing seems to be the only one of its kind, so that comparisons are obviated. It would be rash indeed, of course, to recommend Muenchinger over Furtwaengler in the *No. 88*, and there is no gainsaying Scherchen's momentary primacy in the *Clock* if not Ormandy's for the finer orchestral playing, but the problem of choice is not so formidable if the budget will permit only one disc to start with. The *Oxford* is a sensational bargain, provided you want the Beethoven overtures. But the catalogues are full of competition at a little more money and the buyer must weigh the couplings by his own criteria. Don't write off Malko in any event; he is a conductor of stature and the equal of many higher-priced competitors. Fine sound on both of these discs.

—J.L.

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KODALY: *Psalmus Hungaricus; Marosszek Dances*; Ernst Haefliger (tenor) with the St. Hedwig's Cathedral and RIAS Choirs (in the former) and the RIAS Symphony Orchestra of Berlin conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Decca LP DL-9773, \$3.98.

▲THE Urania version is by now in the antique class. The recent one on London

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had the disadvantage—though some listeners may find this not a disadvantage at all—of being sung in English. Also its coupling, the *Peacock Variations*, is rather more stunningly done on Mercury with Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin*. I cannot report that the Decca sound is equal to the London's, but it is at least adequate by current standards. Musically, however, it is clearly the finest of the lot. This man Fricsay has something, and no mistake about it. Temperament and taste about sums it up, and an uncanny ability to get into character with whatever music he has in hand. All of his forces herewith are first rate. On the overside is the LP première of the *Marosszek Dances*, for which I have always had a special fondness that will now, I trust, be shared by a great many. They are only the *Galanta Dances* all over again, of course, but of those we can easily take another portion and it is a pleasure to welcome this music, however belatedly, to the catalogues.

—J.L.

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MENOTTI: *Violin Concerto*; **HONEGGER:** *Symphony No. 2*; Tossy Spivakovsky (violin) and the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor LP LM-1868, \$3.98.

▲RAVISHING sound. The Honegger performance is a triumph. Munch elicits a far stronger impression than Hull did in the old Concert Hall version, and to these ears he is much more aware of the symphony's import than was Solomon—whose somewhat angular conception is coupled with another Munch specialty, the *Rivier Second*, which we may or may not be getting from Munch himself. I am bound to admit that Munch makes much more of the Honegger than I would have thought possible on earlier recorded evidence. Colleagues who had heard him do it in concert—I have not—assured me some time ago that my inability to perceive any sizable achievement in it would be dispelled if ever I experienced it under Munch. On short acquaintance I concede this, but I see no reason for altering my previous conviction that the music

is too grim, its alleged glimmer of hope too well disguised, to make for anything but a topical piece. As a document of one artist's reaction to life in occupied Paris, it remains a striking accomplishment. I cannot say as much for Menotti's effort, but I add in all fairness that it has earned a considerable respect in the critical press generally. To me it seems a mere pastiche, with suggestions of Walton here, Glazunov there, and not much typical Menotti anywhere. A skillfully wrought showcase, to be sure, but little more. Spivakovsky plays superbly, as is his wont. When will the record companies give him his due?

—J.L.

MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 14*, K. 449; *Serenata Notturna*, K. 239; six *Notturni* for voices and woodwind—K. 436/9, K. 346, K. 549; Grete Scherzer (piano), Emerentia Scheepers (soprano), Monica Sinclair (mezzo), Geraint Evans (baritone), and the London Baroque Ensemble conducted by Karl Haas. Decca LP DL-9776, \$3.98.

▲BEST performance of this concerto I have heard on records. Gulda's recent version, which is the only competition sonically, was unaccountably glib. Scherzer gets right inside the score, holds it up to the light and lets us see its diamond-like facets. The ordinarily heavy-handed Haas provides a properly Mozartean ritornel, deft and unassuming. I do not understand why Decca chooses to compete with itself on the K. 239; the Zimbler already have given us a beautifully contoured conception. This one is perhaps more in keeping with the grand tradition, but the execution *per se* is not in the same class. The little *Notturni* for voices and woodwind are a delight, and it is about time they reached LP. Far less substantial Mozart will be upon us, I fear, before the forthcoming bicentennial is done. Good sound.

—J.L.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 27 in G*, K. 199; *Symphony No. 30 in D*, K. 202; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Georg Ludwig Jochum.

Oiseau-Lyre OL-50039, \$4.98.

▲THESE symphonies were issued by Oiseau-Lyre back in 1951 (see Oct. 1951 issue). London engineers have bettered the reproduction some but without reducing the degree of bass reverberation which is excessive for music as light and graceful as these Mozart works. The *G major Symphony* is in the style of the Italian sinfonia (or overture), while the *D major* has four separate movements. Among the early symphonies of Mozart, these stand out, notably the *D major* for its fine slow movement. While some Mozart enthusiasts will probably want this disc, it might be well to wait since the conductor's competence is not justly served in the heavy reproduction.

—P.H.R.

NIELSEN: *Violin Concerto*, Op. 33; Yehudi Menuhin and Danish State Broadcasting Orchestra conducted by Mogens Woldike. **DEBUSSY:** *La Fille aux cheveux de lin*; **RAVEL:** *Kaddish*; **FALLA:** *Spanish Dance* from *La Vida Breve*; Mr. Menuhin and Gerald Moore (piano). RCA Victor LHMV 22, \$4.98.

▲MR. MENUHIN has identified himself with several concertos outside of the well known repertoire. It has been one facet of his artistry that deserves high praise. Sooner or later, someone was bound to "discover" the Nielsen *Violin Concerto*, as the composer has occupied a conspicuous place in the scheme of things since LP materialized. The work is well written for the solo instrument, but is not in the pattern of the more famous works in this genre. There are no heroics. It is divided into two movements with slow introductions followed by quicker sections. Nielsen's fondness for varying modulations prevails through the score and gives it an individuality and character of its own. This work was composed after the *Sinfonia espansiva* and, as Robert Simpson says in his book on the composer (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.—London), "it is, like the symphony, a very genial work, but much more relaxed." Mr. Menuhin gives us a fine per-

formance and the conductor is a sympathetic co-partner. Excellent recording. The encores, rather out of place, are nonetheless appealing for the fine teamwork of the violinist and the pianist.

—P.H.R.

PROKOFIEV: *Chout—Ballet Suite, Op. 21a; Lieutenant Kije—Suite, Op. 60*; Paris Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Jascha Horenstein. Vox PL-9180, \$5.95.

▲PROKOFIEV'S ballet *Chout* or *Buffon*, based on a Russian folk tale, was composed in 1915 and received its first performance by the Diaghilev company in 1921. The title is a French transliteration of the Russian word for buffoon. The composer arranged a suite of 12 numbers from the ballet which is recorded complete for the first time. About a year ago we had a realistically recorded version by Vladimir Golschmann and the St. Louis Symphony that was well received. Now we have an even more idiomatic performance, brimming over with mirth, mischief and mayhem, with a more suitable coupling. The conductor is to be commended for including the portions that have never been recorded before, as well as for the engaging performance.

As a filler we have a colorful reading of the same composer's suite from the film *Lieutenant Kije*, dating from the early thirties. This music wears extremely well, especially when performed as it is here.

The orchestral sound is bright and glittering.

—R.H.R.

RACHMANINOV: *Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18; MENDELSSOHN: Capriccio Brillant, Op. 22; Moura Lympnay (piano) with Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Nicolai Malko.* His Master's Voice LP LHMV-15, \$4.98.

▲MOURA LYMPNAY had made a specialty of performing the music of Rachmaninov, for in the past she has recorded the *24 Preludes* and the *Third Concerto*. Now we have her vigorous and forceful version of the familiar and oft-recorded *Second Concerto*. She was most

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fortunate in having Nicolai Malko conduct, for the result is exceptional. We have a combination of playing, conducting and last, but not least, splendid, realistic recording such as this highly colored music demands.

Mendelssohn's somewhat faded *Capriccio Brillant* has new life infused in its veins by Miss Lympnay and Mr. Malko. The piece actually sounds quite pleasant when performed with the grace and style lavished on it by this combination. —R.H.R.

ROSENBERG: *Symphony No. 3 ("The Four Ages of Man")*; the Stockholm Symphony Orchestra conducted by Tor Mann. London LP LL-944, \$3.98

▲SCANDINAVIAN composers have been getting their phonographic due with compound interest in recent months. Thanks in particular to Mercury and London, and also to HMV, most of the major and minor masters of the north countries are now fairly represented in American catalogues. One of the first should have been the Swedish contemporary (b. 1892) Hilding Rosenberg. As it turned out, he is among the last. Anyway, he's in, and we should rejoice that so fine a work as this 1939 homage to Rolland's *Jean Christophe* was chosen for the occasion. By this time Rosenberg had pretty well got rid of his earlier Germanism and reverted, with certain advanced notions operating, to the personal-polyphonic tradition of his homeland. That is to say, he retained from his exposure to Schoenberg and Hindemith mostly what they had retained from their exposure to Bach. In the end, this defines the Sibelian style, and Rosenberg is clearly indebted to his older neighbor. But it defines the style of Vaughan Williams, too, and the epilogue-like closing movement of this symphony inevitably evokes the English composer's great *E minor* prototype. What is personal about the work at hand is a uniquely expressive harmonic simplicity; its chromaticism is melodic and the unfoldment is virtually diatonic. At the première a narrator was put to reading sections of the Rolland novel aloud before each movement. Thank

heaven this gimmick was thought better of before the score was published, because the music stands up nicely without reference to any more specific program than the implications of its subtitle. The performance herewith is presumably authentic. Fine recorded sound. —J.L.

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ROSSINI: "Seven Great Overtures"—*Tancredi*, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Il Turco in Italia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Semiramide*, *Il Viaggio a Reims* and *Le Siege de Corinthe*; the Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Mario Rossi. Vanguard LP VRS-456, \$4.95.

▲IT was highly sensible to exclude *The Barber* from this sequence because so prospective customers own it in whole or in part. The same is true to a somewhat lesser extent of *Cinderella*, and no doubt *Semiramide* is the overside of virtually everyone's *William Tell* because Toscanini's performances on a single 10" disc are the finest available. Allowing for the duplication(s) that may be operative, the wealth of lesser known Rossiniana assembled herewith is well worth the total price. Rossi's Viennese forces cannot match the NBC Symphony but their adjustment to the Italian provincial style is a credit to the conductor's skill. The unfamiliar items are all crash-bang fare, musically uninteresting but lots of fun every once in a while. Robust, resonant sound. —J.L.

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ROUSSEL: *Petite Suite*, Op. 39; *Concerto for Small Orchestra*, Op. 34; *Sinfonietta for String Orchestra*, Op. 52; *Piano Concerto*, Op. 36; Leila Gousseau (piano) and *L'Orchestre des Concerts Lamoureux* conducted by Paul Sacher. Epic LP LC-3129, \$3.98.

▲ALL of Roussel's best short scores, beautifully performed, on a single disc—what else need be said? The Ansermet *Petite Suite* was coupled with *The Spider's Feast*, which is also available in a superb Paray performance so that's that. None of the other pieces is currently recorded elsewhere. The bargain aspects of this new issue are heightened in particular

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by the inclusion of the *Piano Concerto*, which is not a concerto at all in the usual virtuoso sense but rather a study of the instrument's percussive value in the expressive palette of a modern orchestra. Sacher limns everything with sympathetic intellectuality. The sound is just a bit bass-heavy but on the whole quite satisfactory. Highly recommended. —J.L.

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SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 9 in C (Great)*; Hallé Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli. RCA Victor Bluebird LP LBC-1085, \$2.98.

▲HERE is real value for the money. Sir John Barbirolli's vigorous interpretation of Schubert's great *C Major Symphony* is enhanced by New Orthophonic sound as well as the spacious acoustics of the hall where the recording was made. The splendid sound is matched by the wonderful instrumental playing and the vitality of the performance. This is one of the best of the many fine versions of this symphony currently available.

—R.H.R.

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STRAUSS: *Tod und Verklärung*, Op. 24; Willem Mengelberg conducting the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam; *Till Eulenspiegel*, Op. 28; Clemens Krauss conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Telefunken LGX-66032, \$4.98.

▲MEMORIES of Mengelberg and his famous performances of the tone poems of Richard Strauss are revived with this release. One suspects that both of these performances may be the same as those issued on Capitol P-8100, but not having the latter disc at hand, I cannot be certain. Mengelberg and Krauss were specialists in the music of Strauss and there is reason to believe that the latter was more considerate of the composer's interpretative suggestions, since he and Strauss were close friends. These performances were originally issued on 78-rpm discs by Telefunken. Mengelberg left the Concertgebouw in 1945, and this recording was probably his last Strauss performance. The playing of the orchestra

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is exceptionally fine, revealing the dominant personality of the conductor who made the Concertgebouw one of the great orchestras of Europe. The quality of the recording lacks tonal brilliance and today is definitely dated, but the performance is nonetheless a worthy memento of the conductor. The value of this re-issue of Krauss' *Till* is negated by the fact that the conductor re-recorded this work with the same orchestra for London in recent time, where the sound is far superior.

—P.H.R.

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STRAVINSKY: *Petrouchka—Suite; Le Sacre du printemps*; the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia LP ML-5030, \$4.98.

▲MANY years ago the Philadelphia Orchestra made recordings of these works that were definitive for a long, long time. It was only proper and fitting that the organization should have an opportunity to recapture this distinction. Never since it got to be called the "World's Greatest Orchestra" have I heard it sound so much as if it were just that, excepting possibly in the Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra* of some months back. Ansermet may make just a little more of *Petrouchka*, come a step closer to its balletic essence; Monteux admittedly has a special affinity to *Le Sacre* that nobody ever has equalled; the composer himself has conducted both of these works, with more success in the latter. But taken altogether (for this is, after all, the only coupling of the pair in the catalogues) it would be difficult to conceive of a better bargain than Columbia offers here. The interpretations are straightforward, but the requisite sense of destination always is present, and always the sheer execution is a marvel of ensemble virtuosity. The sound is gorgeous.

—J.L.

●
TCHAIKOVSKY: *Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasia; Ouverture solonelle, 1812; Marche Slav*; the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia LP ML-4997, \$4.98. August, 1955

▲ALL said and done Ormandy is a reactionary, and bless his heart for it because nothing brings out the best in him like the most standard of standard repertory. These Tchaikovsky performances are the last word on the subject as far as I am concerned. The lush Philadelphia strings are prominently on display, but never once does the conductor depart from good old-hat interpretation to show off his boys. The recorded sound is superb, perhaps not quite as close to perfect as Scherchen was given by Westminster in precisely the same program, but then Scherchen didn't have the sense to leave these thrice-familiar scores un-studied and the results were rather outlandish if admittedly exciting. Ormandy restores the music to its well known shape, tries no tricks, just lets it play itself. And his results are sensational if admittedly unoriginal.

—J.L.

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TCHAIKOVSKY: *Souvenir de Florence, Op. 70*; the Arthur Winograd String Orchestra. MGM LP E-3173, \$3.98.

▲THIS is not the same work recorded for Westminster by Swoboda. Winograd has edited the original, with instrumentation as follows: four each first and second violins, two each first and second violas and two each first and second cellos. The textures are much more transparent than they are in Tchaikovsky's somewhat muddy score, and altogether I would say more balanced as well. But this is not so much an improvement on the prototype as a completely new identity, because the Tchaikovskyian muddiness has a personality while the clarity herewith has only a better ordered mingling of timbres. Still, the revision confines itself almost totally to deployment of personnel and can, therefore, be recommended over the aged competitive issue as to sound. The MGM group plays more musically, too, if not with the compelling ardor that any Tchaikovsky work needs to come across as it should.

—J.L.

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VIVALDI: *Le Quattro Stagioni, Op. 8*; John Corigliano (violin) and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New

York conducted by Guido Cantelli. Columbia LP ML-5044, \$4.98.

▲ IN the strictest sense of the word this is easily the most impressive version to date, although I am not yet impelled to part with the Cetra dubbing of Molinari's ancient and inappropriately romantic but oh, so wonderful performance. Cantelli is a virtuoso stick man and a master of orchestral theater. His conception of this work, accordingly, is less sentimental than tautly dramatic. Everything is slick, perfect. But the music doesn't breathe. The sun can't get in. It's all indoors, and concert-hallish, stiff where it might have bent with a soft breeze. Mind you, now, I repeat that this is easily the most impressive version available. Certainly it is not as stodgy as Muenchinger's, although the consensus favors the latter. And certainly it is defensible to treat with this score as program music and hence dramatically indeed, and not simply as an around-the-calendar idyll, which is how it has always struck me. These are objective considerations, and if any doubt lingers as to my feeling about this recording I must add that I intend to keep it, and who knows whether or not it will get to be a favorite after a while? The music is already, which is why I have been perhaps unduly harsh. Corigliano's soloistics, by the way, are not only perfection but quite endearingly warm, in January as in July. Good, resonant Carnegie Hall sound.

—J.L.

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WARLOCK: *Capriol Suite; Serenade for Frederick Delius*; **IRELAND:** *Minuet*; Boyd Neel String Orchestra, Boyd Neel (cond.). London 10" LD-9170, \$2.98.

▲ WARLOCK'S *Capriol Suite*, said to be founded on old French dances, is—according to Hubert Foss—"really an entirely original conception in which one finds the fullest expression of Warlock's flair for bodily movement and exaggerated gesticulation." Nonetheless, it is an attractive work in which his introversion is far less apparent than in his songs. His *Serenade*, written for Delius' birth-

day in 1922 is a lovely work, conceived much in the manner of Delius' own music. The little *Minuet* of John Ireland was originally written for brass band but not knowing this one would believe it had been written for strings. I suspect, however, that it might be more colorful in its original guise. The *Capriol Suite* was previously issued on London LL-801, linked to Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*. Many listeners may well prefer these couplings. The performances are excellent and the recording is richly realistic.

—P.H.R.

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BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37; 32 Variations in C minor, Op. 101*; **MOZART:** *Piano Sonata No. 16 in B Flat, K. 570*; Emil Gilels (piano) with the National Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Alexander Gauk. CRLP-177.

KABALEVSKY: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor*; **PROKOFIEV:** *Piano Concerto No. 1 in D flat, Op. 10; Piano Sonata No. 2 in D minor, Op. 14*; respectively Gregory Ginsburg (piano) with the National Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Dmitri Kabalevsky, Sviatoslav Richter (piano) with the same orchestra conducted by Kiril Kondrashin, and Emil Gilels (piano). CRLP-186.

KARLOWICZ: *Violin Concerto in A, Op. 8*; **SYZMANOWSKI:** *Sonata in D minor, Op. 9*; respectively Halina Baranova (violin) with the National Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Kiril Kondrashin and David Oistrakh (violin) with Vladimir Yampolsky (piano). CRLP-190.

MENDELSSOHN: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor*; **TAKTAKISHVILI:** *Piano Concerto*; respectively Emil Gilels and A. Iokheles (pianos) with the National Philharmonic Orchestra conducted respectively by Kiril Kondrashin and Abram Stassevitch. CRLP-191.

SAINT-SAENS: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22*; **GLAZUNOV:** *Piano Sonata in E minor, Op. 75*; Emil

Gilels (piano) with the National Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Alexander Gauk. CRLP-178.

SIBELIUS: *Violin Concerto, Op. 47*; **MATCHAVARIANI:** *Violin Concerto*; respectively David Oistrakh and Maurice Vayman (violins) with the National Philharmonic Orchestra conducted respectively by Alexander Gauk and Alexei Matchavariani. CRLP-172.

(All Colosseum LPs, \$3.98 each.)

▲THE BEST of this lot are Oistrakh's magnificent performances of the Sibelius and the Szymanowski. The latter apparently is identical with the version on Angel, which is coupled with the same artist's Franck sonata. Certain other of these performances echo earlier or currently new ones on the Concert Hall and Period labels, but one cannot be sure in view of the prevailingly poorish sound. Actually, the only grounds for this notice is the opportunity to comment briefly on the Matchavariani, Taktakishvili and Karlowicz concerti, the latter two of which are described on the jacket fronts as "sensational" and "great" respectively. A certain interest attaches to all of these works. Mieczylaw Karlowicz (1876-1909) was a gifted but exceedingly morbid Pole whose esthetic was Tchaikovsky *cum* Kafka. His *Op. 8* is a respectable achievement, and its solo part is dazzlingly set forth by Barinova. Those who do not happen to own the Angel version of the Szymanowski are commended to this disc before they buy; myself, I did not like his Franck at all. The concerti by Alexei Matchavariani (b. 1913) and Otar Taktakishvili (b. 1924) are both Stalin Prize winners and both as depressingly reactionary and eclectic as that dubious honor pre-supposes. But the soloists in either case are so terrific that the listener is momentarily persuaded to believe the asinine and semi-illiterate program notes. The Gilels talents are so well known by now through other and better reproduced performances of the same works, notably the ones issued by Angel, that there would be little point in digni-

fying these sonic failures. Three versions of the Beethoven *Third* by this artist are listed in the LP catalogues. The best of them is exceedingly fine, but the one at hand surely is the worst. The conductor seems to have been incompatible with his soloist altogether; the latter is consistently several steps ahead of everybody else in the performance that comes off this recording. And while we are speaking of sonic values, it should be noted that the Sibelius is low-level despite a passable amount of surface noise. Only this disc and the Karlowicz-Szymanowski, which is satisfactorily engineered by our minimum standards, give evidence of having been taped from somewhere closer than across the street. —J.L.

CHAMBER MUSIC

BEETHOVEN: *Trio in D, Op. 70, No. 1 ("Ghost")*; **MOZART:** *Trio No. 4 in E, K. 542*; *Trio de Trieste*. London LP LL-1177, \$3.98.

▲THESE performances are not, perhaps, what the Central European would demand in classic repertory. They are warm, lyrical wherever possible, and always the listener is sure that the musicians are enjoying themselves. In other words, real chamber music, even to certain imperfections of ensemble. Personally I prefer the Westminster version of the Mozart (that label offers all six of the series on three discs). So that I am inclined to stick with the Albeneris on the Beethoven if only because their *Ghost* is coupled with the companionate *No. 2* from the same grouping. But the Trieste boys are better recorded than the Albeneris were on their now aging Mercury disc. —J.L.

BEETHOVEN: *Septet in E Flat, Op. 20*; Members of the Vienna Octet. London LP LL-1191, \$3.98.

THE SAME: Barylli String Ensemble and Vienna Philharmonic Wind Group. Westminster LP WN-18003, \$4.75, or SWN-18003, \$3.75.

▲SONICALLY the London is less appropriate, so abundantly blessed with spa-

ciousness that one assumes the seven players were seated in the center of a large studio and provided with a microphone each. The performance is wonderful, however, and no musical complaints of any consequence can be lodged. Overall I liked better the Westminster version, which also has a "big" sound but gives evidence of more astute mike placement. The similarly Viennese complement in the latter leaves no grounds for grievance, either—even less so than their fellow townsmen, I would say, but no doubt the distinction could be reduced to the slightly unrealistic spotlighting of the London participants. Those who don't know the work at all are commended in passing to the tasteful orchestral version by Toscanini, which is coupled with a Cherubini symphony. Other competition is too dated and need not be considered. —J.L.

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DEBUSSY: *Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp* (1915); *Syrinx* (unaccompanied flute); **ROUSSEL:** *Trio for Flute, Viola and Cello, Op. 40*; Julius Baker (flute), Lillian Fuchs (viola), Laura Newell (harp), Harry Fuchs (cello). Decca DL-9777, \$4.98.

▲THE Debussy sonata, with its refined craftsmanship, its subtle and complex rhythms and its interlacing melodic patterns, is a work that grows on one with repeated hearings. It is a work that modern recording serves to best advantage particularly when the performance is a sensitive and subtle one, as in this version. An older version by Wummer, Katims and Newell, which Columbia dubbed from 78 discs onto LP (ML-4090), has been withdrawn. The only other version (Westminster 5207), by a Viennese group, does not compare to the present one. Baker's playing may lack the subtlety of some French players, like Moyse, but his tonal beauty and discretion in preserving a perfect blend with the other instruments is a praiseworthy artistic achievement. Lillian Fuchs brings subtlety and beauty to the melancholic viola line, and Laura Newell plays the harp part with exquisite artistry. The recording has an atmospheric charm

wherein the three players are blended to perfection. Baker's performance of the short unaccompanied flute piece, which Debussy originally called *The Flute of Pan*, is a genuinely lovely performance. What modern recording can achieve when its source is open to the highest frequencies is brought out here. No other performance of this little work has ever conveyed the countless overtones of the flute.

The Roussel *Trio* is a little masterpiece of its genre, delicate, poetic and imaginative. The three players do it justice, but here one may be torn between this fine performance and the one by Doriot Anthony Dwyer, Joseph de Pasquale and Samuel Mayes (Boston B-208), in which the flute playing of Mrs. Anthony is often more subtle and more delicately colored. Yet, no one would wish to pass up this version, particularly if one hears the Debussy. —P.H.R.

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FRANCK: *Sonata in A*; **FAURE:** *Sonata in A, Op. 13*; Joseph Fuchs (violin) and Artur Balsam (piano). Decca LP DL-9716, \$4.98.

▲IN THIS rather unwise coupling (unwise because so many collectors will be happy enough with whatever Franck or Fauré they own to pass it up without a fair trial) Fuchs turns in two exceedingly solid performances. He may infer an undue sameness in the respective temperaments that they represent, but the juxtaposition of their common tonality is perhaps to blame for this impression. One would have liked more passion in the Franck, but the fact is that he gives off more of it than Oistrakh did in a recent recording, so there is really no basis for complaint by direct comparison with the closest competition (Francescatti, Heifetz and Stern did theirs long before LP engineering came of age). Balsam's accompaniments are absolutely superb, as they tend to be even more consistently than with the more famous Gerald Moore's in my minority opinion. But then I have been prejudiced by Balsam's uniformly perfect playing in countless recitals. The

ascinating thing is that this perfect accompanist becomes a perfect collaborator when his modest personality joins another. Listen to this disc and be convinced. Good sound.

—J.L.

MILHAUD: *La Cheminée du Roi René; Suite d'après Corrette*; The French Wind Quintet. London/L'Oiseau-Lyre LP DL-53002, \$2.98.

▲THE Angel *Cheminée*, coupled with Hindemith's *Kleine Kammermusik* and an Ibert trifle, still is the preferred version. Rampal's flute in this new issue is rather more asthmatic than light modern repertory can take, unless of course you would find it programmatically in keeping with the visage of a royally rotund sybarite. The overside is new to LP, and welcome. Michel Corrette was an eighteenth-century organist who wrote mostly pedagogical pieces of severe mien. Milhaud's suite is a take-off on one of these, laid out in eight delicious tableaux. Good sound.

—J.L.

MOZART: *Quartet in D major, K. 499; Quartet in B flat major, K. 589*; Netherlands String Quartet. Epic LP 3LC-3100, \$3.98.

MOZART: *Quartet in D major, K. 575; Quintet in D major, K. 593*; Barylli String Quartet, with Wilhelm Huebner (viola) (in Quintet). Westminster LP WL-5356, \$5.95.

MOZART: *Sonatas in F major, K. 376, in A minor, K. 402, in E flat major, K. 481*; Walter Barylli (violin) & Paul Badura-Skoda (piano). Westminster LP WL-5394, \$5.95.

▲WARM, vigorous, tender playing is characteristic of the Netherlands String Quartet. If future releases are as fine as this one, we shall be fortunate indeed. The instrumental playing is exceptionally polished, and the recorded sound is as realistic and well-balanced as any to be heard today. These scores have been recorded many times before, but there is always a place for such a splendid release.

August, 1955

The Barylli Quartet gives a forceful, clean, unsentimental performance of the *D major Quartet, K. 575*. They are joined by Wilhelm Huebner in a vital, rhythmically incisive reading of the sunny *Quintet in D major, K. 593*. The recorded sound is spacious and realistic, generally superior to earlier versions of these scores.

The latest release of Westminster's project of recording the complete Mozart Violin Sonatas features one sonata each from three of the composer's mature periods. The *F major* was written in the spring or summer of 1781, the *A minor*, the following year and the *E flat major*, one of Mozart's finest works in this form, late in 1785. One can see on this record the gradual changing of the composer's idea of the role of the violin and its relation to the piano. The *E flat major Sonata* has a more elaborate and integrated violin part than any of its predecessors. The performance is excellent in every way, for the artists have obviously played together many times and have achieved wonderful ensemble. The recording is well-balanced and full-bodied.

—R.H.R.

MOZART: Sonatas—*K. 11 in G, K. 306 in D, K. 481 in E Flat; Variations on the Song "Hélas, j'ai perdu mon amant," K. 360*; The Amsterdam Duo (Nap de Klijn, violin, and Alice Heksch, Mozart piano). Epic LP LC-3131, \$3.98.

▲COMPATIBLE collaborations, all of these. Both artists know their Mozart, their instruments, and each other. You couldn't ask for more—unless it would be the impossible eventuality that competing labels get together to avoid duplications. In sonata series such as Epic, Haydn Society and Westminster have under way (and Decca and Columbia have for the moment completed) the customer is pretty much reduced to choosing a pair and staying with them. Otherwise the coupling matter just gets all out of hand. In the present case, only the *K. 11* among the sonatas is new to LP, the *K. 481* having been recorded by Barylli/Badura-Skoda and the *K. 306* having

been recorded by Schneider/Kirkpatrick. You pays your money and takes your choice. Further deponent sayeth not, except that the Epic sound is much more natural than "radial" for once. —J.L.

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MUSIC OF INDIA—Morning and Evening Ragas; Ustad Ali Akbar Khan (*sarod*), Pandit Chatur Lal (*tabla*), Shirish Gor (*tamboura*), Yehudi Menuhin (narrator). Angel LP 35283, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲IN APRIL of this year the Museum of Modern Art in New York presented an extraordinary concert of music from India. Khan and Lal were the participants, and Menuhin provided commentary. Angel astutely arranged to record a representative sampling of this program. It is just as exciting on microgroove as it was "live," but then the average listener will not have the visual frame of reference enjoyed by anyone who was present at the original event. The contents of this disc are improvisations on a number of *ragas*—a *raga* being in effect a theme, of which there are several hundred in common use throughout India. The *sarod* is a stringed instrument that is played always by plucking; of this grouping it is the only one to take improvisatory flight. The *tamboura* is a four-string affair tuned to the tonic, dominant or sub-dominant of the *raga*; in actual performance it is confined to insuring a sort of drone accompaniment. The *tabla* or drums are used to mingle rhythmic variations with the thematic high-jinks of the *sarod*. The scale is fixed to a tonic, as all modal music is, but there are some thirty unequal intervals in the Indian octave and its precise performance is consequently no journeyman task. I can only assume that these collaborators are always in tune. The results are, however, ever fascinating and, like the finest American jazz that they rather resemble, frequently hypnotic. Crystal-clear sound. Discreet remarks by Menuhin. —J.L.

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MUSIC FOR THE HARP: *Sonata per arpa*, Op. 68 (Casella); *Nocturno* (Respighi—arr. Newell); *Antiche Dan-*

za ed Arie (Respighi); *Harp Solo* from *Lucia de Lammermoor* (Donizetti—arr. Zabel); Laura Newell (harp). Philharmonia PH-109, \$5.95.

▲AMONG present-day harpists, Laura Newell remains an artist of ingratiating charm and subtlety. She is not, like some, concerned primarily with exploiting the harp as a virtuosic instrument, though she has at her finger ends all the necessary technique to do justice to music requiring it. Those who admire the harp as a solo instrument will not wish to miss this disc. The criticism of arrangements for the harp (of music that was written for other mediums) may be justified in some cases, but here one feels that the Respighi arrangements are in keeping with the present medium, particularly those ingratiating *Antiche danze ed arie* which the composer wrote first for the piano. The *Nocturno* was an early orchestral work which seems well suited to the harp. The one original piece, Casella's *Sonata for Harp*, gives us an insight into the later artistry of a composer who passed through many phases of composition until he arrived at his last, which embraced a return to Italian classicism. Miss Newell, in her notes, tells us that the "content of the music, in raising some unusual and subtle technical problems, dictates a special kind of 'technique within a technique'." This, one is unaware of in her deft and expressive playing. The work is a fascinating one for its rhythmic subtlety and poetic feeling. The reproduction is most natural without too much reverberation to obscure the melodic lines of the music, or to preclude an infinite wealth of overtones associated with this instrument in reality. —P.H.R.

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SCHUBERT: *Quartet in E flat, Op. 125, No. 1*; **HAYDN:** *Quartet in F minor, Op. 20, No. 5*; Vienna Philharmonic Quartet. Telefunken LP LGX-66034, \$4.98.

SCHUBERT: *Quartet in D minor, Op. Posth. ("Death and the Maiden")*; **MOZART:** *Quartet in D minor, K. 421*; Musical Arts Quartet. Vanguard LP VRS-463, \$4.95.

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▲THE MEMBERS of the Vienna Philharmonic Quartet are apparently also members of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, although there is no information about the group on the record sleeve. The instrumentalists are Gustav Swoboda, Siegfried Rumpold (violins), August Pioro (viola) and Richard Harand (cello). Some of these names will be familiar to collectors, for they have made records in other combinations in the recent past. The present organization is not as polished as one could wish, especially in the lovely Haydn score, where the rough edges are all too apparent. The Schneider Quartet performance is superior in every respect—sound, intonation, ensemble, style and feeling. There is much more in the early Schubert score than this ensemble brings out. Granted that this is not the most profound music, the *E flat Quartet* is a remarkable creation for a youth of sixteen. The present group, however, play in a most perfunctory manner, with little grace and elegance. The lifelike recording reveals all too clearly the qualities of the instrumentalists. In sharp contrast to the Viennese performance, we have two thoroughly satisfying renditions of two masterpieces by Schubert and Mozart. The signature of each score is D minor, which seems to be the only reason for coupling these two scores. It does not seem to be a commendable practice to couple two different composers, when there are so many works to choose as a more satisfactory backing. Be that as it may, the Musical Arts Quartet is surely one of the finest recording today. Their tone is clean, buoyant and vivacious, and their style enhances these scores in no small degree. There are numerous versions of the wonderful Schubert score, so it is high praise to say that the present version will stand on its own with the best. The Mozart work also receives a penetrating, vital performance that is difficult to match. The recorded sound is bright and spacious with a lifelike quality that may be wholeheartedly recommended. —R.H.R.

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DANZI: *Quintets in B Flat & G minor, Op. 56, Nos. 1 & 2*; French Wind Quintet. Oiseau-Lyre LP DL-53005, \$2.98.

▲FRANZ DANZI (1763-1826) is one of many minor German composers who wrote copiously in all forms and who have been consigned to text-books by time. His operas, symphonies, masses and chamber works never appear on programs today although, from the present samples, his is pleasant, listenable music with no great profundity. The composer was a cellist for a time in the court orchestra at Mannheim, then moved successively to Munich, Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. The present record contains two of the three quintets for wind instruments that comprise his *Op. 56*. The instrumentalists in the present performances have made many records in the past, so they should have a wide following. They are Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute), Pierre Pierlot (oboe), Jacques Lancelot (clarinet), Gilbert Courrier (horn), and Paul Hongne (bassoon). The style of the music reminds one of Mozart and Haydn divertimenti for wind instruments, but without the required (or expected) inspiration. This is pleasant, out-door music that should be, and probably was, background music for conversation. The instrumental flavor has been captured in a most satisfactory manner by the recording engineers.

—R.H.R.

KEYBOARD

ALBENIZ: *Iberia* (Books I-IV); *Navarra*; *Cantos de Espana*; José Echaniz (piano). Westminster LP set WAL-219, \$11.90.

ALBENIZ: *Iberia* (Books I-IV); José Falgarona (piano). Vox LP set PL-9212, \$11.90.

▲NEITHER of these complete performances is comparable to the now aging version of Books I and II by Arrau. Despite the latter's vintage sound it is a remarkable achievement and one regrets that Arrau does not record the whole business under modern studio conditions; I know of nothing whatsoever

that he has ever played more electrically. Falgarona and Echaniz are both of them careful, even assiduous, in getting through these tremendously difficult pages. But the requisite virtuosic sweep is nowhere in evidence, and it is sorely missed. Dollar-wise the Westminster album is preferred as between the two new contenders; the shorter works on side 4 are new to LP and decidedly welcome. Otherwise the merits and demerits of both issues are about even up. —J.L.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonatas No. 28 in A, Op. 101; No. 30 in E, Op. 109*; Paul Badura-Skoda (piano). Westminster LP WL-5357, \$5.95.

▲It is no small compliment to Paul Badura-Skoda to say that his versions of these two late Beethoven piano sonatas hold their own among the titans who have already recorded them. There is more in these scores than the Viennese pianist can bring out at present, but his interpretations have a vigor and tonal splendor that will recommend them to many listeners. The recording, made in the Mozartsaal in Vienna, has plenty of resonance, but the piano tone is realistic. —R.H.R.

CHOPIN: 17 *Mazurkas* (Nos. 2, 6, 11, 12, 20, 22, 26, 27, 31, 32, 36, 37, 40, 41, 43, 47 and 50); William Kapell (piano). RCA Victor LP LM-1865, \$3.98.

▲ONE is torn between sentiment and cool objectivity—or as cool as anyone can be in the matter of these intensely warm little masterpieces. The late Kapell was well on his way to becoming a great pianist. Everywhere in his last recordings there are foreshadowings of this eventual-ity. Already he was a master technician and a stylist of infinite skill. That he did not quite achieve the rank of giant before his premature death will remain a major tragedy for the interpretative art, which can ill afford to lose such unexampled gifts. In another case, that of Lipatti, the end came immediately after greatness did, and fortunately we have a handful of recordings to attest this. Kapell was a mere step or two short of it, which in

certain repertory is enough to turn us elsewhere. So with the *Mazurkas*. Taken altogether they belong to Rubinstein, although Novaes and even Horowitz have made some of them particularly their own. Those of us who treasure the memory of Kapell will want to have this disc for entirely subjective reasons. Others are referred to the Rubinstein set which is the only complete sequence and for all practical purposes the last word on the series as a whole. —J.L.

MOZART: *Sonata in G, K. 283; Sonata in A, K. 331; Sonata in C, K. 545; Rondo in A minor, K. 511*; Guiomar Novaes (piano). Vox PL-9080, \$5.95.

▲THIS record contains three of Mozart's most popular sonatas and, for good measure, the deeply felt *Rondo in A minor*. Probably the most familiar of all Mozart sonatas is the *A major*, with its final *Rondo alla turca*. Mme. Novaes give a brilliant interpretation to the first movement—a theme and variations, wherein she varies her accents and tonal coloring in a remarkable manner. Occasionally she chops a phrase, but the movement has depth and character. Fortunately, she does not rush the final movement, so we can appreciate her varied and colorful effects. She does not play down to the little *Sonata in C*, said to have been written for beginners, but treats it simply and delicately. The earlier *Sonata in G* is effectively performed in a disarmingly simple manner. The stylistic individuality of the pianist's interpretations are so charmingly realized that criticism in this quarter is forestalled. Mme. Novaes is splendidly served by the realistic recording. —R.H.R.

ALBENIZ: *Cadiz, Granada, Malaguena, Op. 71, No. 6 (Rumores de la Caleta), Malaguena, Op. 165, No. 2, Sevillanas, Tangos in A Minor, Op. 164, No. 2 & D Major, Op. 165, No. 2*; **MOMPOU:** *Cancs i Dansa No. 1, Scènes d'Enfants (Cris dans la rue, Jeux sur la plage, Jeu, Jeu, Jeunes filles au jardin); Charmes; José Echaniz (piano)*. Westminster WL-5382, \$5.95.

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GRANADOS: *El Pelele; Goyescas, Books*

1 & 2 (Los Requierbos, Coloquio en la Reja, El Fandango del Candil, Quejas o la Maja e el Ruisenor, El Amor y la Muerte, Epílogo—Serenata del Espectro); Amparo Iturbi (piano). RCA-Victor LP LM-1925, \$3.98.

▲THESE two collections of Spanish piano music contain several of the most popular as well as the most difficult pieces in the current repertory. Three selections from Albéniz' *Suite Espagnole* are included on the Westminster disc (*Cadiz, Granada and Sevillanas*), as well as a pair of *Tangos* and *Malagueñas*. Some of these are among the most played of Spanish encore pieces. On the reverse side of Mr. Echaniz' record we have a group of miniatures by the Catalan composer, Federico Mompou. These highly individual pieces are not played today with any degree of frequency, with the possible exception of *The Young Girls in the Garden* featured as an encore by Guiomar Novaes and Gina Bachauer in recent years. They are decidedly minor works, dating from the period 1915—1928, but they make a refreshing change from the standard concert fare. Competent performances with recorded sound that is satisfactory.

Amparo Iturbi has featured Granados' *Goyescas* in concert for some years, so it is fitting that she should record these evocative works in their entirety. Although *El Pelele* was not published with *Goyescas*, the composer made it plain that this highly-colored composition might be used as a prologue, as it is here. Miss Iturbi's vivid performances, praised by the composer in years past, should gain new converts by virtue of the splendid sounding recording. It might be added that a print of a beautiful painting of Goya is used on the record sleeve.

—R.H.R.

Piano Music for Children by Modern

Composers: *Little Piano Pieces, Op. 45, No. 4* (Hindemith), *Mountain Idylls* (Hovhaness), *Enfantines* (Satie), *Tales from the Flamenco Kingdom* (Surinach), *Ten Studies for Beginners, Op. 59* (Toch); Marga Richter (piano).

August, 1955

MGM LP E-3181, \$3.98.

▲ERIK SATIE was one of the first composers in this century to specialize in children's composition. All too few important composers have followed in his footsteps. Satie's *Enfantines* consists of three groups of several short pieces. The groups are entitled *Small Talk Appropriate for Children, Picturesque Childhood Scenes* and *Inopportune Pecadillos*. Each group has several sections, each with a witty, descriptive title and an accompanying text, commenting on the music (fortunately included in the excellent notes). These pieces alone would make the record worth owning. The Hindemith selections are drawn from the group of pieces comprising the composer's *Op. 45*, bearing the title *Music to Sing and Play (For Amateurs and Music-Lovers)*. The *10 Easy Five-Tone Pieces for Piano* make up the fourth section. They are miniatures, not too difficult to play, but quite provocative and epigrammatic in quality. The Toch pieces, composed in 1916, are decidedly "modern" in feeling and technique, making an interesting complement to the Satie and Hindemith pieces. The others by Hovhaness and Surinach were written for this recording, and the composers coached Miss Richter in their performances. They make pleasant, if undistinguished, additions to the other works of this unusual collection. The pianist gives thoroughly satisfactory performances that have been recorded in an exemplary manner.

—R.H.R.

VOICE

CHRISTINE: *Phi-Phi* Abridged recording sung in French; Jean Richard (Le Pirée), Henri Genès (Phidias), Marina Hottine (Aspasie), Dominique Tirmont (Ardimedon), Perette Souplex (1st Model), Pierre Olivier (Pericles), Andrée Grandjean (Mme. Phidas), Chorus & Orchestra of the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées conducted by Frank Pourel. Westminster LP WL-5413, \$5.95.

▲HENRI CHRISTINE'S operetta *Phi-Phi*, was first performed in Paris just after

the first World War and became a smash hit that ran for several years. Its tunes are bouncy and gay, just right for the mood of post-war Paris. It is easy to understand why it was such a hit when one listens to this peppy, light-hearted performance. The score has been adapted for the phonograph by Claude Dufrène. There will be those who feel, as does this listener, that too much of the spoken dialogue has been retained and that Le Pirée (Jean Richard) has too large a speaking part. The texts of the musical portions are included as well as a translation of most of the French. Phi-Phi's *Chanson des Paiens* remains in French only, for rather obvious reasons. Christiné owes quite a debt to Offenbach, for he satirizes the French operetta much in the manner of the earlier composer's satires on Meyerbeer and his contemporaries.

The voices are pleasant without being outstanding and the recording is satisfactory. The record, incidentally, won the coveted *Grand Prix du Disque*. An earlier version featuring Bouvril is no longer available.

—R.H.R.

Andrea Gabrieli & Contemporaries of the Venetian School (16th Century): *In decharcordo psalterio, Sacerdos et pontifex, Filiae Jerusalem, Maria Magdalene, Cor meum conturbatum est, Annuntiate inter gentes* (A. Gabrieli); *Lapidaverunt Stephanum, Te gloriosus Apostolorum chorus, Ave Rex noster, Cum autem venisset, Surge propera, O Altitudo divitiarum, Tu es Petrus* (G. M. Asola); *Facti sunt hostes, Ave Maria* (G. Nasco); *Praeparate corda vestra Domino* (C. Porta); *O Sacrum Convivium* (T. L. Viadana); Choir of the Cappella di Treviso directed by Monsignor Giovanni d'Alessi. Vox LP PL-8790, \$5.95.

▲EARLIER releases by this choir have featured works by most of the composers represented on the present record. Only Viadana, with his marvelous *O Sacrum Convivium*, has not appeared in this series. As in the previously released records (Vox PL-8030, 8370, 8610 & 8830), the choir is splendidly recorded, but the

singing itself is on the rough side. The trebles are strident at times and the tenors and basses may sound a bit too vigorous for most tastes. In spite of these reservations, the record may be recommended as an excellent sampling of the motets of some seldom-heard composers of the 16th-century Venetian School.

—R.H.R.

GLANVILLE-HICKS: *The Transposed Heads* (Opera in Six Scenes); Audrey Nossaman (Sita), Monas Harlan (Shridaman), William Pickett (Nanda), Dwight Anderson (Voice of Kali), Robert Sutton (Guru), an unidentified chorus and The Louisville Orchestra conducted by Moritz Bomhard. LPs Lou-545-6 (2 discs, three sides); available by subscription only; write The Louisville Orchestra, 830 South Fourth St., Louisville 3, Ky.

▲HOW a critic can say of an opera he has never seen that it "does not come to life" I cannot understand, whether or not he has had a chance to study the score. And yet one New York reviewer with a known aversion to the music of Peggy Glanville-Hicks has said as much of *The Transposed Heads* on the basis of this recording. He may have occasion to eat his words when the opera comes to life—at least literally—in a Broadway production this fall. Miss Glanville-Hicks has composed, in my judgment, an entirely stageworthy work of compelling and sustained loveliness. The libretto is an adaptation of a Thomas Mann novel that has to do with a unique triangle in which, the husband and lover having decapitated themselves for reasons of faith and absolution respectively, the confusion becomes utter by the lady's heeding a god's command to replace the extremities. As you might have guessed by now she botches the job, and a guru is consulted as to who is married to whom. He is no help at all, as it turns out in the immolative last scene. There is not enough space herewith to permit a more detailed précis of the text, but it goes without saying that, Mann being Mann, the metaphysical implications of the plot and not the plot itself are of consequence.

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So that the composer has understandably proceeded in *Leitmotif* fashion, with a theme redolent of the Rachmaninov *Third* predominating and almost as frequent allusion to another of gamelanish cast. The vocal writing is simply beautiful throughout. All three of the leading roles, and the two lesser ones as well, are handled with aplomb by the young singers assembled by the redoubtable Moritz Bomhard, and he deserves special commendation for contriving so effective a performance as this undeniably is. —J.L.

ITALIAN SONGS; Lucia Albanese with Orchestra conducted by Carlo Savina and with D. Marzolla (piano). RCA Victor LM-1857, \$3.98.

▲THE Albanese charm ingratiates this program of fifteen Italian songs. One cannot help but feel that what is regarded as second-rate by many critics these days is redeemed by the artistic singer. Many of the songs in this truly enjoyable recital, which the writer once urged Mme. Alganese to record, were included in the recitals of leading artists of days gone by. Who among us sings Tosti's *Vorrei* today, except vocal students ill-equipped to do it the justice that Licia Albanese does? And Puccini's charming little lullaby is a strangely neglected song. Even Sibella's *Girometta* is neglected nowadays. Not so Donaudy's *O del mio amato ben*, but our singer has honored Donaudy further by including two other of his songs, never before recorded, both of which have the classic charm. The two songs of Verdi are welcome because the singer expressively puts across their dramatic significance. This is one of Licia Albanese's greatest attributes; her interpretations are always motivated by the significance of the texts which she enunciates clearly. More's the pity that a leading record company like RCA Victor neglects to provide the complete texts and translations that all who appreciate a fine song recital like this can enjoy it the more. No admirer of Mme. Albanese will wish to miss this recital of favorite songs of her homeland. She endows them with a living expressivity

that gives them more important status than most Italian artists do. The first nine songs are accompanied by a chamber orchestra of a curious and often makeshift character. The rest are with piano accompaniments. I would have preferred all with the piano. The recording throughout is very lifelike, even to the singer's breath on occasion. The songs are: *Vorrei* and *Ave Maria* by Tosti, *Madonna Renzuola*, *O del mio amato ben* and *Quand'il tuo diavol nacque* by Donaudy, *Mal d'amore* by Buzzi-Peccia, *Piscatore e Pusilleco* by Tagliaferri, *O Primavera* by Tirindelli, *Riflessi* by Santoliquido, *E l'uccelino* by Puccini, *La Perla* by Bianchini, *More, Elisa, lo stanco poeta* and *Stornello* by Verdi, *Girometta* by Sibella, and *Beppino rubacori* by Pieraccini.

—P.H.R.

ITALIAN SONGS, VOL: 3: *Na sera 'e Maggio* (Cioffi); *Tu ca nun chiagne* (Curtis); *Ricuodele 'e me* (Tiberino); *Passione* (Bovio); *Ddojo lacrème* (Innocenti); *Nun me sceta* (Tagliaferri); Gianni Poggi (tenor) with Orchestra conducted by Ernesto Nicelli. London LD-9163, \$2.98.

ITALIAN SONGS, VOL: 4: *Napule ca ne se va!* (Tagliaferri-Murolo); *Autunno* (Curtis); *L' te vurria vassa'* (Capua-Russo); *Pulecenella* (Paligiamo); *Me so' mbriacato e' sole* (Desposito); *Dicitencell vuje*, (Fusco-Falvo); Fernando Corena (bass) with Orchestra conducted by Ernesto Nicelli. London LD-9164, \$2.98.

▲OF the two recitals of popular Italian songs, most of them Neopolitan, Corena's is the more expressive. He makes much of the texts which makes one resentful that translations were not provided on the envelope instead of the lengthy notes with their promotional intent. Poggi sings well and with evident sincerity, but it is Corena who immediately sustains an alien listener's attention. Admirers of both singers will undoubtedly welcome these recitals of popular songs from their native land, as only the Italian singer steps down from the operatic stage to identify himself truly with such

songs. Nicelli's orchestral accompaniments and the recording are excellent.

—J.N.

LEHAR: *Das Land des Lachelns* (excerpts); *Paganini* (excerpts); Soloists & Vienna Light Opera Company conducted by Franz Sanauer. Epic LP LC-3130, \$3.98.

▲"SOLOISTS and Vienna Light Opera Company" is the only listing of the artists on the label and jacket of this record. Whoever they are, the vocalists are first-rate and the orchestra is on a par with other organizations of the same type that are recording in Europe and America. This seems to be the first collection of excerpts from *Paganini* to appear on LP. Although this score is not as well known as some of the composer's other works, it contains many attractive melodies that have become popular through the years. Foremost among them are *Gern hab' ich die Frau'n gekuesst, Liebe, du Himmel auf Erden* and *Niemand liebt dich so wie ich*. These and several others are included. They are strung together in the manner of a potpourri, rather than an abridged version of the operetta. The selections on the *Land of Smiles* side include the familiar *Dein ist mein ganzes Herz* as well as *Immer nur laecheln, Wer hat die Liebe* and others. The collection, selected and conducted by Franz Sandauer, is performed with plenty of Viennese élan and dash. The recorded sound is full-bodied and well-balanced. If one wants the complete *Land of Smiles*, the recent version with Schwarzkopf, Gedda and Kunz (Angel 3507) is highly recommended.

—R.H.R.

ROBINSON: *Sandhog—A Folk Opera* (abridged and adapted); Earl Robinson (singer and pianist) and Waldo Salt (narrator). Vanguard LP VRS-9001, \$4.98.

▲AS an off-Broadway production this didn't last long, and we need not detain ourselves with it as a contribution to the operatic discography. As the title implies, *Sandhog* has to do with tunnel

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diggers. Its text is a composite of *fin-de-siècle* Whitmanesque proletarianism and a kind of "good old days" nostalgia with a Celtic flavor. The recorded abridgement is handled by the composer, singing at the piano with an assist from one other voice. Rather an effective job as a documentary, and clearly worth the attention of Americana collectors, but musically uninteresting and not an opera at all. Fine sound. —J.L.

SIQUEIRA: *Xango—Brazilian Negro Cantata; Eight Brazilian Folksongs* (harmonized and orchestrated by Siqueira) —*Mulher Rendeira, A Casinha Pequenina, Coco-Penerue, Engenho Novo, Abaluaie, Acalinto, Neu Engenho e de Humaita* and *Boi-Bumba*; Alice Ribeiro (soprano) and an unidentified chorus and orchestra conducted by José Siqueira. Vanguard LP VRS-465, \$4.95.

▲STYLIZED folk music always is difficult to classify because it isn't folk music and it isn't art music. Usually it is somewhere in between, however, and sooner or later you can decide which pole it gravitates toward more strongly. That rule doesn't work with José Siqueira, at least not with the music sampled on this unusual disc. Xango seems to be the Indian name for—or the Indian equivalent of—the Roman Catholic St. Jerome. This work distills the essence of that *macumba* ritual to which the devout among Brazilian Negroes address themselves on the Sabbath eve and to which they hold tightly, without relenting for a moment, until Sunday morning. Essentially it is an invocation of the saint, but of course formal elements are mixed with the indigenous even in what the tourists hear, so that Siqueira's artful adaptation (not in Portuguese but in the Nago dialect of the Bantus) is at least twice removed from the folk heritage. Anyway, this is a fascinating score, not so much interesting as gripping, like an optical illusion that you can't take your eyes from. The songs on the overside are lovely and the soloist turns them out winningly, but the memory of Elsie

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—J.L.

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VERDI and PUCCINI RECITAL by Hilde Gueden with the St. Cecilia Academy Orchestra, Rome, Alberto Erde (cond.). London 10" LD-9165, \$2.98.

▲THE arias are in order *Ah! fors' è lui* and *Sempre libera* from *La Traviata*; *O mio babbino caro* from *Gianni Schicchi*; *Signore ascolta* from *Turandot*; *Sul fin d'un soffio etesio* from *Falstaff*; and *Tu che di gel sei cinta* from *Turandot*.

Miss Gueden has been called the Viennese skylark and much of her singing bears out that application. She can float a high tone exquisitely though sometimes she fails to sustain her support throughout a phrase, and one is too often conscious of her breathing. Her *Traviata* is beautifully sung but not with true depth of feeling. But how many sopranos toss off the final phrase of *Sempre libero* as easily as she does without breaking the final phrase? Her *O mio babbino caro* has a touch of drama in her feeling for the text, and her second aria from *Turandot* is sung with pathos and feeling. She is less successful in the first aria, where her ending is miscalculated. How lightly and easily she floats the aria from *Falstaff*. All in all, a charming souvenir of this gifted soprano. The orchestral accompaniments are excellent, and the recording very atmospheric, even to hall echo on the top tones.

—P.H.R.

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

BRAHMS: *Academic Festival Overture*, Op. 80; **LISZT:** *Les Preludes*; **SIBELIUS:** *Finlandia*, Op. 26; **WAGNER:** *Siegfried Idyll*; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Heinrich Hollreiser. Vox LP PL-9350, \$5.95.

▲THIS varied program of orchestral staples needs a more imaginative conductor than it receives here. These are no more than routine performances. The orchestral sound is excellent, especially in *Finlandia*, where the famed Bamberg Symphony shows off its fine brass choir.

—R.H.R.

DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5 in E Minor*, Op. 95 (*New World*); the New Symphony Orchestra of August, 1955

London conducted by Rudolf Schwarz. Capitol LP P-8308, \$4.98.

▲NO matter how good this were—and it is a fine performance, beautifully recorded—there is always the joker that Toscanini's can be had a dollar less, not to mention Stokowski's or Ormandy's or (when Westminster's prices are brought into line, as they probably will be) the wonderful new Rodzinski version of which I have heard the tapes (see review pg. 392). I hear nothing in Schwarz's straightforward interpretation that calls for special comment, either pro or con.

—J.L.

MOZART: *Concerto No. 26 in D major*, K. 537 (*Coronation*); *Rondo No. 1 in D major*, K. 382; Carl Seeman (piano) with Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (in Concerto) & Bamberg Symphony Orchestra (in Rondo) conducted by Fritz Lehmann. Decca LP DL-9631, \$3.98.

▲CARL SEEMAN gives a cool, well-modulated though slightly academic reading of one of Mozart's late piano concertos. He receives excellent support from Fritz Lehmann and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. The balance between the realistic piano and the splendid-sounding orchestra is just right, so the disc may be recommended to those who like this type of performance. The cadenzas are not identified.

The *Rondo*, used as a filler, appeared some time ago on Decca 4079. Again we have good balance and fine recording.

—R.H.R.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 2 in C minor*, Op. 17 (*Little Russian*); Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra conducted by Thor Johnson. Remington LP 199-187, \$1.95.

▲HERE is exceptional value for a small sum of money. Thor Johnson leads the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in a spirited, splendid-sounding version of this rather neglected, but delightful, symphony of Tchaikovsky. The present performance is somewhat more objective in feeling than the only serious rival, that by Sir Thomas Beecham.

—R.H.R.

MUSIC OF SPAIN

PIANO MUSIC FROM SPAIN: *Espana*, Op. 165 (Albeniz), *Iberian Dance No. 1* (Nin), *Three Spanish Songs and Dances* (Surinach), and *Poema Fantastico* (Turina); William Masselos (piano). MGM LP E-3165, \$3.98.

CORRIDA! (**Spanish Bull Ring Marches and Pasodobles**): Madrid Bullfight Band and the Spanish Air Force Military Band conducted by Manuel G. de Arriba. Decca LP DL-9764, \$3.98.

ANDALUSIAN DANCES: Luis Maravilla (guitar) Pilar Calvo and Alejandro Vega (dancers), Juan J. Andrade (castanets), and Ramon de Loja (flamenco singer). Angel LP ANG-64020, \$2.98.

PASODOBLES—Music of the Bull Ring: Band of the 25th Infantry Regiment of Jaen conducted by F. Sanchez-Curto. Angel LP ANG-64019. \$2.98.

POPULAR SPANISH CLASSICS: *El Amor Brujo* (Falla), *Dances from The Three-Cornered Hat and Spanish Rhapsody* (Chabrier); Diana Eustati (mezzo) with (in the Chabrier) the Berlin Philharmonic and Bamberg Symphony Orchestras conducted by Fritz Lehmann. Decca LP DL-9775. \$3.98.

CASTLES IN SPAIN: *La Oracion del Torero* (Turina), *Madrilenes Suite* (Torroba), and short pieces by Larregla, Breton, Albeniz, Guridi, Fernandez, Gombau and Chuca-Valverde; *Orquesta Zarzuela de Madrid* conducted by Frederico Moreno Torroba. Decca LP DL-9763. \$3.98.

GRANADOS: *Danzas Espanolas* (complete); Alicia de Larrocha (piano). Decca LP DL-9762. \$3.98.

MUSICA DE ESPANA—Preludios e Intermedios No. 1: Preludes to *El Tambor de Granaderos* and *La Revolucion* (Chapi); Intermezzi from *La Torre del Oro*, *El Baile de Luis Alonso* and *La Boda de Luis Alonso o La Noche del Encierro* (Gimenez), *Goyescas* (Granados), *La Picara Molinera* (Luna) and *La Dolores* (Breton); *Orquesta de Camera de Madrid* (augmented) conducted by Ataulfo Argenta. London International LP TW-91020. \$4.98.

THE SAME—No. 2: Preludes to *La Verbena de la Paloma* (Breton), *El Barberillo de Lavapiés* (Barbieri), *La Viejecita* (Caballero) and *La Gran Vía* (Chuca y Duran); Prelude to *Pantomima* from *Las Golondrinas* (Usandizaga); Intermezzi from *La leyenda del beso* (Soutullo y Vert) and *Bohemian* (Vives); same artists. London International LP TW-91004. \$4.98.

SELECCION DE SARDANAS—No. 1: *Angelina, Maria de las Trenes, Bona Festa, Llevantina, Girona Aimada* and *Bell Panades*; Jose Coll (tenor) and the Cobla Barcelona. London International LP W-91009. \$2.98.

THE SAME—No. 2: *El Saltito de la Cardina, Per tu Ploro, Sempre per tu, La Cardina Encara Saltia, Pescadors bons Catalans* and *Sardanes a Mollerussa*; same artists. London International LP W-91010. \$2.98.

▲ ALL of these issues are worthy addenda to the Hispanic lists, which are already so long that it would be pointless to indulge in detailed comparisons. The above-listed few engage our attention for the following reasons: (1) Masselos is a steely-fingered pianist and he is especially at home in the modern repertory. The most effective item in his beautifully recorded recital, consequently, is the Surinach triptych. With the others he is every moment in command, but sometimes short on the

requisite poetic evocation. Still, no one else has got around to them on microgroove and they are good works all. (2) One side is given over to crash-bang marches, very tinny in the main but absolutely authentic. The other features crowd voices sandwiched in between—one supposes—astute moves by the unseen and unheard matador. Probably dubbed in, but the illusion is quite complete. (3) Maravilla has been heard more advantage on his full-length Westminster recitals. This hodge-podge cannot but appeal to those who want a one-disc introduction to the whole Spanish business, however. It has a little of everything, tastefully mingled. (4) No voices here, but lots of excitement and atmosphere just the same. Altogether a better buy than No. 2 foregoing, if only because there seems to me to be nothing indigenously Spanish about Spanish marches anyway. Our own J. P. Sousa did much better. But the *pasodobles* are another matter. (5) If you don't happen to have any of these popular pieces already, this collection is a good buy. Otherwise, forget it. (6) The sleeper of the lot, if only for a marvelous performance of the famous Turina work. And superbly recorded, at that. (7) Senorita de Larrocha plays the Granados gems with more ardor and persuasiveness than does Echaniz, to my taste. But the Westminster disc is engineered to perfection. (8 and 9) These are tape snips from the complete *zarzuela* recordings. Without exception they are well played and for the most part the recorded sound is on par with London's import standard of late, which is as high as Decca's is low. (9 and 10) These are further samplings of the traditional *sardana*, which is a Catalonian dance—or rather dances, since there are "long" ones and "short" ones that I cannot accurately differentiate between because the annotations throw up the sponge at "certain complicated details," and who am I to clarify the issue when the annotations are reprinted from the standard Spanish musical dictionary? Anyway, very lovely and listenable. —J.L.

LP RE-ISSUES

(Continued from page 382)

certante in E flat, K. Anh. 9 coupled with Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas—Suite* (CAL-213). The Purcell music is a former Ormandy-Philadelphia Orchestra release. The Stravinsky (dating from 1939) and the Borodin (from 1938) were highly praised performances in their time. So was the Mozart which dates from early 1941. The Purcell dates from 1940. The Beethoven, which dates from 1927, is cramped in sound and unpleasurable to ears addicted to modern recordings.

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Digging up performances like this from the earliest years of the electrical era are a mistake, as the orchestral sound lacks essential resonance and definition.

Among issues, labelled the Centennial Symphony (actually Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony), are some old favorites which collectors will also probably want. CAL-101 has the first performance (and by many the one still preferred) of Prokoviev's *Peter and the Wolf* (dating from 1939) coupled with Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel* (dating from 1945). CAL-108 brings us Koussevitzky's widely admired, first recording of Sibelius' *Second Symphony* (dating from 1935), and CAL-108 brings us his admired performances of Tchaikovsky's *Francesca di Rimini* (dating from 1948), Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz* and Sibelius' *Tapiola* (both dating from 1942).

Among recent Columbia Entré issues are three discs featuring Artur Rodzinski in association with the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra. (Columbia, who does not employ pseudonyms for the original performers, has recently reduced its Entré discs to \$1.98.) The Rodzinski re-issues are Brahms' *First Symphony* (RL-3117), Tchaikovsky's *Sixth Symphony* (RL-3118), and the Moussorgsky-Ravel

Pictures at an Exhibition (RL-3119). Two of these works were formerly on higher-priced Columbia LPs—the Moussorgsky-Ravel and the Tchaikovsky. Neither the Brahms nor the Tchaikovsky are more than acceptable as recordings. The Moussorgsky-Ravel is much better, and for its price a good buy. Entré RL-3120, which offers the Mitropoulos-Minneapolis Symphony performance of Mahler's *First Symphony*, is dated today and eclipsed as a performance by several modern releases. Mahler fares so much better with hi-fi reproduction that even the budget-minded should think twice before buying an older issue.

Camden also releases quite a number of records giving the true performers' names. Among such, which can be highly recommended to admirers of the artists, are *An Erica Morini Recital* (CAL-207), *John Charles Thomas Sings Songs You Love* (CAL-208), *Marjorie Lawrence in Opera and Song* (CAL-216), *Richard Crooks Favorites* (CAL-217) and *The Art of Josef Lhevinne* (CAL-265). As recordings, these are all satisfactory. Excerpts from some of the above Camden LPs can be found on 45s. Those interested in 45 discs should ask their dealer for a catalogue.

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